ACTION! ADVENTURE! (AND SHORT STORIES TOO!)

IN THIS EDITION OF —

ye olde WORDEATER

WORDEATER AWARDS
FOR XV & XVI

Poetry:
- Long: Jan Emerson, Ross Stewart
- Short: Mike Markwell, Bonnie Sayko

Prose:
- Long: Cheryl McCutcheon, Chris Schroeder
- Short: Pat McGuire, Edward Lovekamp

Fiction:
- Long: Len Heine, John Scott
- Short: Pat Bohler, Gale Blogg

Drama:
- Gale Blogg

Comedy:
- Long: Len Heine, Scott Cheffer
- Short: Len Heine, Pam Heavens

Covers:
- Edward Lovekamp
- Ross Stewart

Wordeater awards are sometimes given on the basis of one selection but usually are based on several entries.

The deadline for Wordeater XVII will be October 15th. Manuscripts and cover designs ($10.00 awards for each) should be submitted to John Stobart in C1069. Submit cover Designs on 8 1/2 by 14" paper with one inch margins all around. JOHN STOBART ALONE JUDGES THE AWARDS.

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A VALENTINE'S GREETING

I won't say I'm not flattered
By your passionate insistence,
But if it's all the same to you
I'd rather keep my distance.

DOUBLE STANDARD

His heart aligns contrarily;
Dichotomies enmesh,
Desiring brethren of the soul,
And sisters of the flesh.

IT'S OVER

Linda bit her lip as she hung up. So this is it, she thought, the final brush off.

Carl, her "best friend" of several years, who most acquaintances "knew" would marry Linda someday had finally called. He was coming to talk to her about "something very important."

It had been nearly a year since he left Chicago to move to Milwaukee, and their communication had been limited, by Carl's wish, certainly not Linda's! She had known for years how she felt about him and had made her commitment no secret. But he sporadically put her off, first by going to school in Milwaukee, then by getting wrapped up in his work in Chicago. Since his last break, to Wisconsin, most of the brief and infrequent notes from him had mentioned Ruth, the "charming Milwaukee girl" he had been so close to while in college.

The doorbell rang. Linda considered not answering it, but did.

"Hi," Carl smiled nervously and offered his usual hug. Linda received it cooly, almost rigidly.

"Hello, Carl, you're looking well. It's been awhile, hasn't it?"

Seated opposite one another in the living room, they continued the small talk briefly.

"How's Ruth?" Linda asked suddenly.

Carl winced. "Why, uh .... she's fine. Just fine. Never been better, in fact."

"So I figured. Well, Carl, what's this important thing that brings you all the way from Milwaukee?"

"Your're right. I should get to that. Putting it off isn't going to make it any easier. Linda, I .... that is .... I'd like to ask you to .... I want you to .... come to my wedding." Carl looked ready to faint.

Linda was stunned. A goodbye forever and a wedding invitation in one stroke? What a blow! She managed, however, after an involuntary flutter, to continue her stony composure.

"I'll certainly try to. When is the wedding?"

Carl, gulping and moistening his lips, swayed as he leaned forward. "Why, whenever you want it to be, darling. Isn't the date usually up to the bride?"

Linda screamed.

SOLILOQUY

I

I'm self-sufficient,
Solitary, secretive,
And (sometimes) lonely.

II

You asked, "What's wrong?"
And, though I ached to tell you,
I answered, "Nothing."

III

If I let you see
All I was, am, and would be,
Could you still love me?

AND ANOTHER THING...

One last favor, please-
(You've done so much already)
Get away from me!

POINT OF AGREEMENT

Please stop critiquing me
Every time I breathe;
I don't like me any more
Than you do.

WE CAN'T GO ON MEETING LIKE THIS

"When people put up barriers to keep out the hurt," we agreed,
"They keep out love as well."
So, daring to give and receive, you have timidly lowered your shield;
And I, having doubled my defenses,
Continue to throw rocks at you.

SLOW BUT SURE

You have diminished my intent
To keep us far apart;
As cold rain can errode soft stone,
Warm tears dissolve a heart.

RECIPROCATION

Someone needs a helping hand?
You'll be there to lend it.
Tattered ego at your side?
You're the one to mend it.

Give away condolences,
More than you'll be needing.
But don't be too proud; take some back
When you're the one who's bleeding.

Go and seek a stronger soul;
Share your burdens with him.
Find a shoulder, cry on it;
Be the aided victim.

EDIFICE

Within four walls (some deem it church)
Pale words and music fly;
Without, His birds and butterflies
Evangelize the sky.

- Michael Markwell -

I'M ME

Would you rearrange a daisy into a grotesque dandelion
By tearing out its petals?
If it was, as you've said, my "sweet eccentricity" that
first appealed to you,
Why are you trying to make me be more like the others?

SONNET

When you accuse my heart of being cold
And freezing out the love you try to give,
It seems to me you're being very bold --
Too highly prizing what I won't receive.
And when you charge me with ignoring you
And overlooking all your features fair,
I fear your self-appraisal is untrue;
The beauties you envision aren't there.
The sweet and gentle spirit that you claim
Is sour and brutal when you are upset.
You haven't any patience to your name;
Your selfishness could match my own, I'd bet.
Without continued discourse, let me say:
You simply don't allure me; go away!

RAPTURE

Through rain-scent air at optimum degree
A warmth like sun meets cool of summer breeze,
The velvet night now somehow glows with dawn
While clarions voice many-throated songs.
Beloved, Flower of Creation ---- Sing!
Awake in beauty; rise to meet your King!

- Jan Emerson -

WEDDING BIRTHDAY

Fiery comets flashing past
Wash over me their spray,
Stab my dazzled eyes with light
Then 'lightening' speed away ---
Into zenith-reaching spiral realms
Where I cannot yet go.
(Sneak preview -- I took a peek --
Enough to let me know.)

Though I'm left tumbling in the wake,
This spinning sends me higher
(From where you left me on the ground)
To hold your icy fire.

Electric winds of song so pure
Those notes you played thru me.
The final note, beside the eyes
You left so I could see,
Sounded back the words I read
In flowing firefly flower.
This blossom of conception grows
While I await the hour.

Our Child of Life, a gift of truth,
Is born to light and air
And once again, my love, we merge
And show the face we share.

- Jan Emerson -

DESERT MAZE

Again and again the world comes between
My mind forgets what my heart has seen
What my soul has known since the first drawn breath
What my life must express before my death.
I see, but I don't, what I think I forgot,
And I travel in circles yet stay in one spot.
I return here, return here, yet miss what I seek
And though I'm not listening I hear the truth speak.
How many times have I stood in this place
And turned 'round to tune out myself face to face?
"I" struggles against my struggle to live
And hurts for forgiveness - for my giveness can't give.
"I" can give nothing - not even to me
But giving can love and to love is to be.
My confusion confuses each thought that I think
I die for the water yet can't take a drink.

PAINTING LIFE WITH LOVEFIRE COLORS

My ears reach out to hear the world
And feel the pain it's crying
My eyes see painted wounded clowns
Who try, and must keep trying.

The road to knowledge has its price
And still the price is free
And I can make the clowns' laugh
Turn to bitter irony.

These simple words I give to them:
That fairy tales are real;
That magic lives within the heart;
And faith can really heal.

That I can make a dead child live
For the first time in her life;
That I can make the sun shine,
And calm the sea of strife.

Each one of you, who hears my words
Laugh as his tears roll down
To smother and engulf you
(To think that I'm the clown.)

But I will paint my dreams
With love -- each sweet imagining,
All my silent pictures will
Live and give and sing.

For I believe in "fairy tales"
And golden magic fire
The flame that burns with light & warmth
For all is my desire.

GUESSING GAME

Riddle I:

A shadow cannot cast a shadow,
Nor the smoke retain the fire,
Nor the mist that rises from a lake
Quench a thirst's desire.
A mirror's cast-back image
Can't originate a motion.
The vinegar jug upon your shelf
Cannot contain the ocean....
In these seeming wanderings
Of the mind, can you connect?
To what we are, what we do,
And what is our defect?

Riddles II & III:

If you've solved my Riddle I
I'll give you Riddle II:
If you now know what you are
The question next is who?
And when you've finished that one,
We come to Riddle III:
A study now in patience ---
How to be what you must be.

If the answers all look wrong
How can you be sure what's right?
Will you fall like drops of rain
And dissolve into the night?
Will you let the gutters maelstrom
Pull you to the center,
Lock behind you doors of purity
And beauty you could enter?
Will your "truth" be cut to hide
The lies which make life cheap & shoddy?
Or will you reach within yourself
And touch your perfect body?
Will you be the "camel's back" --
Broken in the middle?

When these questions are behind you,
You've solved the Final Riddle.

- Jan Emerson -

SLEEPING (SOUL) BEAUTY

I'm here to learn of snow and sex
And murdering one's brother,
Of people living side by side
Despising one another.

I'm here to savor dirty socks...
And golden loaves of bread ---
Know sunsets, rain, forgiveness, pain,
And the smiling living dead.

I've come to learn the lesson
Of crucifixion cries;
Of new life nascent in our tears
And what money <u>really</u> buys;

Watch children die and old men born --
A world of contradictions.
See people drown in their pettiness--
Sad self-imposed afflictions.

To see the tangled web of lies
That passes here for sharing
And find I've yet to meet just one
Whose heart was truly caring.

And now I'm nearly ready
To calmly, without fear,
Let it all drop from me,
I've learned there's nothing here.

"Nothing" will not chain me
It's a price too high to pay.
Without you life's a phantom
Stage set with shades of gray.

You are what I've sought
Through time-bound spans of heavy mist.
Beneath the weight of Nothing
I found that I've been kissed.

BURIED TREASURE

How many times have I sat and watched
The changing face of a crowd,
And heard its voice like the tidal fall
Of a muted song hummed aloud.

And marveled at the mighty force
That within each cell seems hidden.
Each seemingly separate entity
The spark flows through unbidden.

How well a simple truth is masked,
How perfectly wrought the disguise
That convinces us we're each a part apart;
Facades beguile our eyes.

What would result, I've wondered then,
If from my head down to my feet
Each body cell began to think
Of itself as total and complete;

If within this universe of life that's me
Each tiny blueprinted "mind"
Decided to seek its destiny
Leaving thought of the body behind.

Into what fierce chaotic tumult
Would my being then be thrown?
What name would be given this malady
That the world would think unknown?

How would learned scientists synchronize,
Set right, my wayward parts?
Would they create a new physiology
Of graphs, and logues, and charts?

And to these renegade and willful cells
If no one could convey
The truth of their community
How long would they stumble, scatter, stray?

Could anyone span that mental gulf
And spark the understanding
That they were born for unity,
Harmony, joining - not disbanding.

Separately they would be "Gypsies"
Crying loneliness and pain.
The loss of 'self' they's fear in joining
Would be not sacrifice but gain.

How many times have you sat and watched
The changing face of a crowd,
And heard its voice like the tidal fall
Of a muted song hummed aloud . . . . .

- Len Heine -

HOW TO PUT A HOLE THROUGH A CONTACT LENS WITH YOUR TEETH

Putting a perfect circular hole in a hard contact lens with your teeth is not as difficult as it sounds. If you've had the personal experience, as I have, you would surely see why. This stunt requires little or no practice and only a minimal amount of intelligence. (I recommend that if you plan to practice much, do get some sort of contact lens insurance to cover the expense of replenishing your lens supply.)

Three main things are needed to puncture a contact lens with your teeth: (1) a contact lens; (2) teeth; and (3) stupidity. The first, the contact, is the most important. The trick without the lens would be meaningless, thus the importance of the lens. Preferably you own a pair of contacts yourself or maybe you have a spare lens you'd like to experiment with. It is unwise to borrow someone else's lens for the purpose mentioned because when the contact is returned it is more often than not unsuitable for further use.

Second on the list of needs is teeth. Two will do as long as they are properly aligned. Incisors can be used if no better choices are available, but premolars are most preferable. Canines are a close second with molars taking third prize.

The third and most often neglected aspect of lens puncturing is stupidity. I use the term loosely to describe any qualities of mental deficiency such as absent-mindedness, forgetfulness, "denseness", common senselessness, ignorance, low intelligence quotient and even some physical handicaps like lack of dental coordination. Whatever particular quality you excell in matters very little. If you have the ability, then the act itself should be fairly natural for you. If stupidity of one type or another only overcomes you for short times now and then, don't worry. A short time is all that is necessary to hole out a contact.

The process of biting the hole is simple and can be covered thoroughly in this paper. To begin, wait until you are wearing your contact lenses and you get dust in behind one, or are poked painfully in the eye. The pain should be significant enough to cause the immediate removal of the lens. Just as important as taking the lens out is not being able to put it back in your eye again. This could result when (a) you are driving, (b) your eye hurts too much, (c) you have no mirror, (d) your hands are filthy, greasy or otherwise polluted, (e) you're drunk, (f) etc.

With nowhere to put the delicate lens you place the contact in your mouth for safe keeping. Now the most important part of the procedure is developing. Don't think about the lens as it is held in your mouth. You should begin to exercise your stupidity abilities by conversing with a friend or even yourself on some interesting or heated topic. This will further aid you to forget the lens in your mouth. For example, you can complain about how your eye hurts or how the damn dust constantly gets behind the damn lens and grinds into your damn eyes. It's also popular to speak to topics such as physics, biology, and physiology where long multisyllabbic words are used. If you can follow the general pattern described above, the contact lens will surely shift between two teeth (hopefully premolars) and will gently but effectively be perforated.

As one can see, the process just described is uncomplicated involving only three main ingredients, a contact lens, teeth, and stupidity. The finished product is a strikingly original conversation piece. Use your own imagination to find uses for your creation. With sets of two you can make matching earrings or bookends. A solo contact lens can be used as a "lucky lens" on a keychain or a finger guide when pushed onto the pointed end of a pencil. Use your own ideas. Good Luck!!!*

*For more interesting methods to alter or lose contacts see my new book Contact Lenses I Have Wrecked and Lost, chapter 4, "Breaking Contacts in Half", chapter 5, "Losing Lenses in Vega Engines", and chapter 6, "Crunching Your Lenses in Books". (Humorously changed, but these are all true.)

- Len Heine -

There was an old miner named Moore,
Who worked deep down on a mine floor.
He was digging a pit
When he fell into it.
And now there's no miner no Moore.

A young child was totally bored,
Because he was so much ignored.
He had not a friend,
But this came to an end
When they cut his umbilical cord.

THE NIGHT DRIVER

PART I

Friday night, April 2nd, I was coming home in my yellow (lemon) Vega about 12:30. My body was tired and sleepy, still recovering from the intense running the day before in track practice.

The alternating red lights up ahead told me the 12:35 freight was moving through Tinley Park. The gates went down and I lined up with a couple of cars ahead of me and another pair behind. I'd usually never seen very many other cars this late at night in Tinley. Unusual, they probably knew I was going to be there.

I made sure my foot was well clamped down on the brake and then leaned my head back on the bucket seat. My eyes closed immediately. I flinched and woke. Red lights were still pulsing, train cars endlessly kept rolling by so down went my head again.

Suddenly to my left a thump, thump, thump of knuckles rattled my side window. No words were spoken, but the knuckles very cleverly conveyed the meaning of the words "Hey, Nerd." My head rose and I looked to the railroad tracks. The gates were up, the train gone and the cars waiting with me were out of sight. Embarassment prevented me from looking at the body connected to the thumping knuckles. Unclamping my foot from the brake and rather hastily moving it to the accelerator. I took off.

I drove a bit too fast over the tracks and a previously loosened tailpipe became a presently disengaged tailpipe. Stupidity was now added to embarassment for the tailpipe was first loosened twelve months earlier. My tiny car now sounded like a 500 horsepower Mack truck (lemon) hauling 350 York barbell sets up Pike's Peak.

Cruising through town I couldn't help but wonder how many sleeping souls were awakened by my Mack truck (lemon) or how many people would dream about diesel volcanoes erupting in their front lawns, Germans bombing Tinley Park with gasoline treesaws, or being chased by National Champions on the ¼-mile strip at smoking U.S. 30 dragstrip at 225 miles per hour, SUNDAY!

As I rumbled home as inconspicuously as a low flying Saturn V rocket, I couldn't help but think how humorous the whole incident was. It would be so funny to tell my friends. They already know I'm a nerd.

PART II

The greatest rational fear I have is falling asleep while driving. I say rational fear because it is often the case when I'm driving home late at night after a full day's work and physical activity, so exhausted that I can barely stay awake. Some of these early morning excursions home I must constantly concentrate to stay conscious. Without knowing my eyes will close and my body will instinctively jerk and twitch me back to reality. These split-second nightmares fill me with such terror that usually after one such incident, I'm in such a frightened state that my eyes remain wide open the rest of the journey home.

One late night trip home occurred recently. It was about 1:30 in the morning, and I was seven and a half miles from home, a fifteen minute drive. For those fifteen minutes I was semi-conscious, feeling as if at any instant that sleep would overcome me. My street finally came up and I rolled down its half mile to my driveway. Pulling up to the garage door I turned off everything and put my head back against the seat. What a relief to be home. A tremendous pressure was off my mind, or so it seemed.

I woke, tilted my head forward and... MY GOD! I'D BEEN DRIVING THE CAR WHILE I WAS ASLEEP!! My heart exploded inside my chest as ultimate terror swept through my body instantaneously. I grabbed the steering wheel and wrenched it to the right for fear of being in the left lane of traffic. Sensations of fear burst everywhere. All nerve endings were screaming from the electric shock of the waking. Ahead I could see only blackness. TERROR!

I managed a whimper before my eyes accustomed themselves to the faint moonlight reflecting off the white garage door. The sight before me and the hazy memories of coming home mingled for a second and I realized my car was in the driveway. The engine was off, the lights were out and I was alive and safely home.

Cursing to myself, I got out of the car. As I walked in the side garage door, memories of the drive home solidified in my head. When I first woke mixed memories of time and place existed. Yes, now I remembered pulling into the driveway and turning out the lights, and the engine off. Yes, I recalled leaning my head back. Damn! I have to quit doing that! In the house, I immediately popped my contact lenses out and fell into bed with all my clothes on, still recovering from the greatest shock in my life. My [illegible] my heart [illegible]

- Len Heine -

July 10th, 1977, began as a normal day in summer. Typical things happened everywhere, especially at home. Breakfast of Cherrios and skim milk, the morning paper arrived, "Bozo's Circus is on the air," kids playing softball at the grade school, the mail came on time, etc. The only thing abnormal was the pure normality of the day. It was 72° as I drove past the bank around 8:30. Sunshine, cumulus clouds, gentle breeze -- just an all-around normal day.

I had decided the previous night that I was going to stay at school all the next day. There was work to be done, and I wanted to write some poetry for Barb; the atmosphere at school was perfect for that.

Geology began at 9:00 and was over at noon. We had studied rock specimens for the last hour after nearly two hours of lecturing. Even though I love the subject, geology was a bore. It had become one of those days. I walked down to the cafeteria to eat, write, and let the fatigue seep from my head.

I bought some Fritos, a large glass of milk, and a pouch of dry roasted peanuts. These goodies along with my two peanut butter sandwiches made a real feast. For hours I sat in the peaceful hall outside the cafeteria and attempted to produce some good poems, poems which contained emotions which I could feel, emotions that touched me, and hopefully would touch others. I was still involved in my poetry when at about 4:15 I strolled up to the cafeteria to get re-involved in some snacks. The Cheetos looked good this time so I bought some, along with a cup of tea.

I sat down again at my table with papers scattered all over the surface, notes here and there, and a cloth bank bag which contained some rock specimens. I toyed with the teabag for a minute, trying to locate a rhyme for "care". Air. Bare. Blare. Bear. Dare. Fair. Flair. Hair.... I finished the line with "prayer," very satisfactorily, I might add. The tea was stong, so I removed the bag. After four hours in the cafeteria hall, my face felt oily and uncomfortable. I couldn't concentrate, so I went to the washroom to freshen up. The clock read 4:26 as I went by.

The water felt good on my face. I repeated my ritual of five splashes. There were no paper towels in the holders or tissues in the stalls, so I dried my face on my shirt tails. It was odd there were no towels, but I felt too refreshed to worry about it.

Wandering back to my table, looking forward to my Cheetos, I observed my Geology book and papers were gone. The rocks and bag were sitting as I had left them. The Cheetos had been emptied out on the table, and the bag was gone. Wise guy, I thought. Nothing under the table, and I couldn't see my things anywhere else either. The cashier, a lady about sixty, sat just outside the kitchen area, and I jogged over to her.

"Did you see anyone take any of the stuff from that table over there?"

"I haven't seen anyone but you in the last five minutes. Is something gone?" She sat with her back turned to the seating area, obviously not having seen who snatched my papers.

"Yeah, my geology book and two folders of papers that I can't replace. Sure you didn't see anybody?"

"Yes, I can't imagine what happened to your things."

"Yes," case closed. "Yes" and my school work, poems, and writing signed off. My heart was pounding in rage at the scumface who took my stuff. Those papers were meaningless to him. Walking back to the table I couldn't stifle a "Shit!" and didn't really try to. I felt no better. "BASTARD!" Those poems for Barb -- how could she not hear them? There was nobody else in the whole place. He must have made noise opening the Cheetos and gathering up all the....

"Bill, Bill come here!" The cashier was having a fit over something. The cash drawer was open and she was standing up. "There's no cash in the register, Bill. It's gone!"

A kitchen worker trotted over to the cashier.

"You been robbed?"

"I never left this register, but the money's gone. It's gone!" She was turning pale. I was up at the check-out in a second.

"My papers and book were stolen the same way. She said she didn't see anyone take my stuff either."

We hadn't had time to even think when Bill happened to glance to his right where the candy was displayed.

"What the heck is coming off here?" The candy lay there, normal, except there were no boxes or wrappers in sight, just choclaty, peanutty lumps in neat stacks. I looked into the cafeteria where the Cheetos and Fritos and other chips were located. The wire rack holding the bags now held nothing. A conglomerate of multi-colored munchies were piled beneath them. Jumping back into the cafeteria, my eyes and mind were spinning and spawning ideas. I vaguely heard the blur of the cashier and Bill chattering behind me, but I wasn't listening. I was looking around me.

The little packets of sugar were gone, leaving white crystalline mounds. There were no paper plates or napkins. The plastic stirs were in a pile, their boxes gone. The bulletin board in the hall was blank save for thumbtacks and staples. Ice cream bars lay frozen and naked in the freezer. A pond of skim milk flooded a counter where half-pint cartons used to be. Little heaps of white substance sat where the cups had been. I felt it. Wax! The paper cups were gone, only the wax coating was left!

How could this happen? I ran excitedly out the cafeteria and up the stairs. Bulletin boards all blank! I was witnessing something fantastic and knew it. I checked three or four offices on the first floor and all were barren. There was nobody to see what had happened.

I sprinted over to the elevator and pushed the "up" button. The door opened immediately. The cubicle was empty. Third floor. Doors closed. Up, stop, doors opened. Was it going to be.....? I jumped out and looked to the right. It was.

"Holy shit!" I just couldn't believe it! My head went blank as my eyes fed impulses to my brain. Perception was total and dominant; thought was zero. I recall walking through the library. The books were gone, all gone, except for bits and pieces of cloth binding and lumps of glue. Plastic book covers were scattered about. The record shelves contained hundreds of coverless albums. Some records had rolled off onto the carpet, their support having vanished. The albums had no labels either, just splotches of glue were left. The librarian must have had heart failure or something, for no one was in the room at all. I had seen enough.

I sat outside the "Learning Resource Center" as the sign stated. It must be made of wood or plastic, I thought. For fifteen minutes my thoughts took over my mind and rambled on. I couldn't stop them -- I didn't want to. Was this happening just here at school or all over the area --- or the country --- the world? The world! Man. Was everything gone? Books, records of birth and death, photographs, the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, my poems, my baseball card collection, my stamps, all the mail. The tissue in the john, the paper towels -- yes -- no wonder! We'll have to use aluminum toilet foil -- Reynold's Wipe. Ha! Bic Pens will drop ten points a share -- stocks, bonds, money -- the cash in the register!

I pulled my wallet out. My driver's license, selective service card, voter's registration, calendar, insurance card, union card, bicycle club card, pictures of my family and Barb --- gone! Thirteen dollars, gone. All that remained was a metal social security plate, two spare car keys, and a tiny gold-plated cross. A cross. My thoughts slowed a bit.

I thought of God. God. He did it. If this happened over the whole world, He did it. No one else could do it; it must be God. For whatever reason, it was ingenius. Never did I think of how something so simple as paper could make so much chaos if it were gone. Why though? Will I ever know? Maybe it wasn't over the whole world. Then why here? How can everything be replaced? Is this for real? The sting on my arm said yes to my last thought as I pinched myself to be sure.

I got up and moped down the stairs, still overwhelmed. My breathing and heartbeat were a little fast yet. Two hands pointed out 4:58 on the wall. Only one girl was in the cafeteria when I got there.

"What's happened to the paper? Everything, it's gone everywhere, all over," said the voice in a frustrated, not understanding sort of way.

"It's all gone," I repeated. "Even the library, the books I mean, they don't exist anymore."

"How can it just disappear?"

"I haven't got the foggiest idea," I said, not wanting to talk.

She looked at me with a "thanks-for-nothing-buddy" expression and trotted off to the stairway.

My bag of rocks was still on the table so I went over to get it. My experienced eyes now saw tiny scraps of fiber and glue which I had dismissed before as the garbage which always seemed to be on the tables. Four staples I noticed too, all that remained of my two folders. A cold cup of tea sat in its saucer. I saw my reflection in the tea. It seemed like a philosophical moment, but all I could think of was that I now saw the teabag was gone, only wet leaves, a tiny staple and a string were left.

APRIL 8, 1993

Yesterday I learned why. This knowledge which I will never repeat to anyone is one of the most astonishing bits of information to be known, more so probably because I KNOW IT'S TRUTH!

Two weeks ago I met an elderly gentleman, Dr. James Dentley, who conversed with me on various grades and locations of uranium ore. We met at a conference on radioactive materials. Being interested in the geological aspect of the conference, I attended. Dr. Dentley, I found, was a former nuclear scientist.

We have become good friends in the two weeks following the conference, chatting on almost any topic with equal vigor. Yesterday evening he and I talked about religion. Dentley is not a religious man, but has a firm belief in God much like myself. At this point he asked that I not repeat the following parts of the conversation to anyone. I gave my word.

Dentley's usual happy, outgoing manner changed, and solemness took over. I was beginning to wonder why all the secrecy but my curiosity was soon appeased. Dentley said there is a God, for He was responsible for what happened July 10th, 1977. I was amazed at how he had such similar ideas. He went on.

In 1964, an unknown scientist by the name of Tenzing proved mathematically a theory of his own conception called

- Len Heine -

"reverse relativity." The main point of Tenzing's Law was that it was possible to travel at infinite speed in no time by using energy infinitely, without "using" it up. It was and still is so totally abstract that even with Dentley's gross simplification, I can only repeat it, not understand it.

The government took eight of the top geniuses in the country and put them together on a project to build a prototype model, if possible, of the first starship. The leap from theory to reality took many years. Everyone in government who knew of the project believed it would never succeed, but kept the project alive because of valuable incidental discoveries concerning the nature of energy and energy sources. Popular scientific opinion was still overwhelmingly in favor of Einstein's theory. Belief was that Tenzing's mathematical "proof" was impossible.

In 1977 Tenzing's success, a prototype model, was constructed. On July 10th the fully completed model was being flown to Washington. At 5:27 pm Eastern time, the flight controllers at Washington International witnessed all the paper, flight information and other vital materials, vanish before them. Mass confusion resulted. Three planes went down, two collided in mid-air, and one crashed in a playground having run out of fuel circling. The prototype was destroyed, the crew and seven of the eight scientists died in one of the planes.

The mountains of information accumulated over the dozen years disappeared in a millisecond. None of it had ever been microfilmed. The greatest scientific achievement of all time was gone. God's wrath came lightly for most but definitely. Man had gone too far.

Tenzing had told Dentley, "I can tell you all this because I am the eighth scientist. I was already in Washington. We had successfully sent the model to the moon and ten different stars and brought it back. It took slightly more than no time, about 1/13,000 of a second. Otherwise, it worked perfectly."

I know Dentley is telling the truth. I still wonder why all the paper disappeared though. Maybe God wants men to start over again on Earth instead of reaching for the heavens. God is wise by definition.

Well, I'm tired of writing. My marker is running low on ink and this is my last page of plastic. Just had an afterthought. Infinite Wisdom versus Infinite Speed -- Wisdom Wins!!

- Pam Heavens -

OH WHAT A YEAR
1975-76

It was a year when the Chinese dominated women's fashions, and, like it or not, quilted jackets flattened chests, and low-heeled shoes had to be worn, even if they were a size too small.

It was the year America discovered Barry Manilow as the oldest living human and the composer of all the songs. Sorry, Bach!

Our TV ads, our clothing, our reading, our restaurant menus (and sometimes the food) were jammed-packed with "Happy Birthday, America." Hail Old Glory, Mother, apple pie, baseball, and hot dogs! George Washington had 60% fewer splinters thanks to the local Orkin man. And that's the way it was 200 years ago.

If our mood ring told us we were depressed, we always had our Pet Rocks to comfort us, even though it was usually a one-sided conversation.

Captain & Tennille bombarded us with "Love Will Keep Us Together." Years from now it will probably be revealed that they used Krazy Glu. (And after a snort of that, it's no wonder she never wanted to touch a man!)

We see a mile-long smile from a peanut farmer named Jimmy Carter. I wonder if he's elected, if anyone will slip and call him Mr. Peanut? Reagan's term might be called Death Valley Days, with the White House limo being replaced by a Conestoga wagon. And President Ford might just make it to the podium without tripping once...perhaps twice or three times, but who's to say? (Sorry about the slip, but I've got this bad right heel...)

Our main maladies were bruises on our hips from the Bump, difficulty in coordinating our legs to the Bus Stop, and lest we forget Boogie Fever and Disco Mania; doctors still aren't sure if these are physical and/or mental diseases.

It was a time when everyone and his brother was reading Cuckoos Nest, and the rest of the population saw the movie. "And the winner is," five times over. We read and/or watched as the struggling Ireland (Nicholson) tried to overcome the Great British Empire (Fletcher). Poor analogy? Well, tough, &*(@!

- Pam Heavens -

I've not covered Elton John, the Beatles' possible reunion, term papers, weight loss around midterm (the hips) and finals (the waist). Nor have I spoken of "Welcome Back, Kotter," "All My Children," "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman," bikini or pie eating contests here at JJC. I think you'll be able to remember the rest.

On graduating from JJC I can look back on the good times and the bad. We've made friends, lovers, and perhaps even spouses. We may be leaving our best friend, but we're going on to something new, exciting, and a little frightening. But if we can make it through the jitters of giving speeches, resource papers, and Coke machines that don't always work, well, hell, we can sure make it through transcripts, entrance exams, dopey roommates, night classes....

- Sharon Marizza -

GRADUATION SPEECH

Mr. Furman, Honored Guests, Fellow Graduates, and Friends:

Commencement addresses are traditionally farewells to the alma mater in honor of the graduate's coming of age and joining the adult world. It should be quite obvious to even those of you at the back of this auditorium that my youth and I parted company several years ago and that I have been part of that adult world for quite some time. Because of this, I would like to break with tradition and tell you what education means to me, for you see, I am in love with learning and I want to be a teacher.

Just two short years ago, I tiptoed into these hallowed halls like a kid in a candy store - wide eyed at the sweet treat of learning. What an array of goodies to pick from - rhetoric, philosophy, biology and mathematics, just to name a few. But, I have to admit that the awe and wonder of education weren't my only motivations in returning to school. I, like many other women, had found myself in a state of frustration, depression, and near unemployment. My children were growing up and no longer needed me in the same capacity of motherhood as they had earlier. I had literally worked myself right out of a job. I had too much time on my hands, and let's face it, there are just so many ways you can move the dust around the house. So, here I am, trying to clear the cobwebs from my head.

Presently, Joliet Jr. College has an enrollment of several thousand students. The average is 27 years old. This student could be fresh from high school, a veteran, a professional keeping abreast of the times, a housewife, or even a grandmother. Indeed, virtually all age and economic groups are represented in this graduating class. The ability to make an education available to such a broad spectrum of the community is, perhaps, the most important function of our college; and an accomplishment of which it can be proud. It has come a long way from its small beginning 75 years ago.

As of late, the administration of this college, as well as other institutions of higher learning across the country, have been struggling with the educational-factory syndrome called grade inflation. Even the most prestigious Universities are being accused of issuing diplomas of little value. These diplomas are losing their value either because students are no longer required to meet certain prerequisites or the standards of measurement have been lowered to the point of mediocrity. Speaking as a graduate, I resent this. Our college should keep the door of learning open to all - to all who will climb the steps to reach it.

Some instructors lower the requirements of their classes in order to accomodate those who aren't making the effort to pass. This accommodation only serves to reinforce the indifference and laxity already present in the underachieving student's behavior. These teachers are telling these students that they don't expect very much from them - and that's usually what they get - not very much. This is not indicative of all teachers nor is it indicative of all students, but only a few are a few too many. It is the teacher's responsibility to maintain an atmosphere condusive to ever higher aspirations. BUT, it is the student's responsibility to maintain the moral and intellectual ethics conducive to personal growth. Yes, the many-edged sword of responsibility cuts exceedingly fine. It is quite evident that, if any improvement in education is forthcoming, it will be the result of a three-fold cooperative effort between administration, faculty, and student body.

We, the graduates of 1976, have taken advantage of the educational opportunities found at this college. Some of us have mastered professions, trades, or crafts; some of us have retrained for different types of employment with prospects of higher incomes; and still others will go on to four year colleges and universities. We all have different backgrounds and different plans for the future, but we all have one thing in common. We have earned our associates degrees, and I hope, we have learned to take pride in our efforts and ourselves. As Henry Wadsworth Longfellow said:

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

- Bonnie Sayko -

MANSON'S SOLILOQUY

The administration's indications
are to sentence me for life.
This restitution's mass confusion
just compounds the strife.

I killed seven pigs of Farmer Sam
to free them from the pain
of society's hypocrisy
that drives us all insane.

"Crazy?", you ask, silently,
from your philosophizing arm-chair.
I'm crazy enough to right the wrongs
of which you're unaware.

To kill for life, you say, is wrong.
Your blinders are in place.
But what about your killing wars,
they're for the human race?

"One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven,
All good children go to heaven."

Hell is here on earth for me,
heaven's in your mind.
I killed seven pigs of Farmer Sam,
yet you say I am unkind.

But what about your social game? --
the rules are for the greedy,
the political piggies always win --
the losers are the needy.

Blackie will rise up high one day
to shoot off Helter Skelter.
My beloved family will descend --
the desert is our shelter.

"Crazy!", you cry, impatiently,
desperation on your breath,
"You can't let him corrupt our youth.
Put that man to death!"

My ideals are stronger than yours,
so time alone will tell....
The truth lies in tomorrow's child,
he will stop this Hell.

What I preach can never die
as long as you exist.
Freedom cries -- release from lies! --
our dreams and hopes persist.

You can kill me now, destroy my life
with the murder of your jails.
But you cannot kill the non-believers,
their numbers will prevail.

Helter Skelter's just postponed.
What's a year, or two, or three?
The revolution's comin' soon,
you're just too blind to see....

- Anonymous -

PRAIRIE GROUND

There is a place on the prairie
a ground where old ghosts sleep.
A few odd steps from their old home
on land so rich and deep.

They came from far with golden dreams
to live off land and tree.
And to their children passed a torch
to light the night for me.

When I'm afraid to live life through
I seek that piece of ground.
I sit awhile and remember those
Who gave me all I've found.

- Gale Blogg -

THE FARM

An open field becomes a dream --
the smell of oats and wheat,
a soft breeze blowing from the South
and dust beneath bare feet.

I'm walking through a field of corn,
In and out the rows,
playing hide and seek with friends
and flushing out the crows.

The old plowhorse lifts up her head
and makes a snorting noise;
then throws her mane into the wind
and limps with vanished poise.

A narrow lane enlaced with weeds
where me and Gramps would walk.
We'd drive the cows home late at night
beneath the stars and talk.

An open field becomes a dream --
The cut grass smelling sweet,
an old house under giant elms
and dust beneath bare feet.

- Gale Blogg -

FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHILD

Characters: Mary Palmer
Patsy Palmer, 14 year old daughter of Mary
Estie Palmer, mother to Mary, grandmother to Patsy

Scene: The living room of the Palmer's apartment. At the far end of the room is a round oak table used for dining. Hanging from the wall above the table is a large, plastic crucifix with rosary beads draped around it.

The kitchen is off to the right end of the room. The bedrooms are off to the left. A blue, floral overstuffed couch sits against the left wall facing a television. A brass chandelier hangs from the ceiling.

The entrance to the apartment is at the right, front of the stage.

It is October of 1961. The place is a town called St. Charles located in the Mid-West.

When the curtain rises, Estie is placing dinner on the oak table in the brightly lit living room. She is tall, thin and dark with sharp features. A noticeably handsome woman for her 58 years. Due to being partially deaf, she talks in a loud, biting voice.

Estie: Patsy! Get in here. What are you doing? Dinner's ready.

Patsy enters from the left wearing a white sweat shirt, pleated skirt and knee socks. She has a gangly structure and is toying with one of her braids.

Estie: Keep your hands off your hair. You're always putting knots in it and then I have to spend hours brushing them out.

Patsy: (Sitting down at the table.) You don't have to take care of my hair anymore, Grandmother. Besides, I'm too old for braids.

Estie: Nonsense. Braids are neat and proper for a girl your age.

Patsy: (sighing) I was wondering if it would be alright if I got my hair cut. I'd like to have bangs and ----

Estie: (Cutting off Patsy.) Bangs! My God in Heaven. I'm not going to have you walking around in bangs. They're too Dutchie. Just forget about cutting your hair.

Patsy: Yes, Grandmother. Where's Mother? Isn't she coming home for dinner again tonight?

Estie: No. Jack Peters is picking her up after work and taking her out. She's been seeing too much of him, and I don't like it.

Patsy is picking at her food and has her elbows on the table.

Estie: Quit picking at your dinner. No wonder you're skin and bones. You look like death warmed over. And get your elbows off the table.

Patsy: I'm glad Mother's going out with Jack. I like him. I hope she marries him. It would be nice having a man around here.

Estie: Marries him! My God in Heaven. He's nothing. That's all I need around here is a man to take care of too. I've got my hands full with you and Mary as it is.

Patsy: If Mother marries Jack we could probably move into a house. (She then lowers her voice.) And I could have my own bedroom. We wouldn't have to sleep together.

Estie: Speak up. You know I can't hear you if you don't speak up. We're doing fine right where we are. I've been managing this household for 14 years and have done a good job.

Patsy: Jack's so funny. He tells jokes that make me laugh.

Estie: You laugh at anything he says. Don't think I don't know what you're up to. You're encouraging him, and I'll have to put a stop to that.

Patsy: (Getting bolder.) You never liked any of the men Mother dated. How come?

Estie: Mary's a beautiful, intelligent woman. I haven't met one man yet that was good enough for her.

There is a silence. Patsy stares at Estie. Estie is eating and is unaware that she is being observed by her granddaughter.

Patsy: (Taking a deep breath.) Wasn't my father good enough for Mother?

Estie: (Dropping her fork.) My God in Heaven! (She gets up from the table and paces the living room, wringing her hands.)

Patsy: Well?

Estie: He was a bum. Mary ran off and married him when she was 16 years old. Then they came back like scared dogs and tried to get my blessings.

Patsy: What did you do?

Estie: Why, I put an end to their foolishness. I told that louse to get out of town or I'd have him thrown in jail. Mary wasn't of age, you know.

Patsy: (Walks to the couch and sits down.) What was so wrong with him? I don't understand. (Pleadingly.) You won't even tell me his name!

Estie: His bad blood runs in your veins, Miss. (She walks over and puts her face close to Patsy's.) He brought disgrace to Mary and me.

Patsy: (Crying and clenching her fists.) You make me feel like some sort of a freak. You never let me out of this apartment. You won't let me have any friends. You won't even let me be close to my own mother.

Estie: (Pointing to Patsy.) What do you think you do to Mary? My God in Heaven. Every time she looks at you she's reminded of the disgrace and shame.

Patsy: (Standing up and facing Estie.) You're lying! Mother loves me.

Estie: Ha! Why do you think she's gone all the time? Why do you think she let me raise you for 14 years?

Patsy becomes hysterical and curls up in a ball on the couch. Estie goes over to her and pulls her up in a sitting position. She then proceeds to wipe Patsy's face with a hanky and smooths her hair.

Estie: Stop crying now, Patsy. Don't make such a big fuss about it. And don't you dare bring up this incident to Mary. You don't want to make her sad, do you?

At that moment, Mary enters the front door and looks at her daughter. When Patsy sees her mother she runs off to the bedroom.

Mary: Mother! What in the world is wrong with poor Patsy?

Estie: It's nothing, Mary. She was just upset about her school work. You know how sensitive she is about everything.

Mary: Well, maybe I should go and talk to her.

Estie: Don't worry about it. I've already settled her down. I know just how to calm her. She doesn't need you.

Mary: (Helplessly.) Well, I feel there must be something I can do when she gets like this.

Estie: Nonsense. Don't worry about Patsy.

Mary: I'm her mother but I feel so useless. I wish there was something I could do to show her I care.

- Gale Blogg -

Estie: *(Helping Mary off with her coat.) Patsy's perfectly fine. But I don't think she likes Jack Peters much.*

Mary: *Really? Why, I thought she took a shine to him. She seemed to really like him.*

Estie: *My God in Heaven, no. Take my advice, Mary. Don't become too serious with Jack Peters. (Pause.) For the sake of the child.*

The lights go out and then the curtain falls.

- Patrick McGuire -

THE CHALLENGE OF REALITY IN WALLACE STEVENS' "THE EMPEROR OF ICE CREAM"

In "The Emperor of Ice Cream" poet Wallace Stevens instructs the reader in the perception of reality. Stevens uses the rituals of sex and death, in the first and second stanzas respectively, to illustrate his beliefs.

Symbols of temporary delight abound in the first eight line stanza. As the "big cigars" of line 1 decay in smoking, the "concupiscent curds" whipped "in kitchen cups" (line 3) will spoil sourly. Similarly, the "flowers" (line 6) will wilt within their burlesque vases of "last month's newspapers" (line 6) as surely as the content of those newpapers has become stale and unappetizing history.

"Wenches" (line 4) and "boys" (line 5) inhabit this world of fabricated mortality. Diametrically opposed in terms of sexual experience, these two groups demonstrate the mutual attraction held by opposites. The promiscuous women loiter teasingly (lines 4 and 5) and inspire the boys to arrive bearing flowers (line 5 and 6) in hopeful pursuit. Critic James Baird writes in The Dome and the Rock (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968) that this exchange of allurement and favor is the concupiscence referred to in line 3. Furthermore, according to Baird, "the milk-shake paradise of the corner drugstore" limned by Stevens in the first stanza is the site of a modern American ritual symbolized by "a feast of ice cream."

The ways and means of sexual pursuit in commodity-ridden America (the business tycoon described as "the roller of big cigars" in line 1 being Stevens' emphasis on the profit base of this "milk-shake paradise") are for Stevens total reality. The lilting, satirical tone of the stanza hints at possible disgust with this contemporary rite of appetite. But line 7, "Let be be finale of seem," warns the reader to apprehend the reality of this scene. The reality presented may be tawdry and puerile, but Stevens asserts that it would be perilous to disregard as less than finally, definitely, and unmitigatedly real. For Stevens the actions in the drugstore paradise well express the human state. All men seek and enjoy the satisfaction of appetite, despite awareness of the ultimate and often quick perishability of their satisfying desserts (e.g., melting ice cream.)

Stanza 2 finds a whore lying dead in her decrepit room. She is covered insufficiently by a shroud embroidered by her own hand, evidence of her attempt to embellish an empty life. Her ugly feet "protrude" (line 13) from the cover and mock the stupidity her living face had portrayed. Her dresser, at once both a cache for things private and a simple shell where the baubles and garmets of her livelihood are kept, lacks three knobs (lines 9 and 10). In contrast, the drugstore where the wenches and boys give life to their lust is relatively opulent, adorned with flowers, newspapers, dresses, and concupiscent curds (lines 3 through 6.)

The poem's final couplet commands the reader to ponder this scene of barren death. There is nothing to gain by ignoring this reality, Stevens again states. "Let the lamp affix its beam," line 15 instructs. Yet it is n not enough to merely recognize this scene, for the truth inherent in it must be understood as well: "The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream," (line 16). Stevens challenges the reader to summon the courage to accept this truth by thoughtfully witnessing the death of a victim of appetite and perishability. Awareness of death as the great and inevitable dissolver of all things and recognition of the undeniable reality of man's albeit futile efforts to satisfy his desires comprise Wallace Stevens' essential instructions on the perception of reality.

- Edward Lovekamp -

REBUTTAL ON
"GERALD FORD: FEAR AND DAMNATION"

I was somewhat suprised to find Mr. McGuire's political article "Gerald Ford: Fear and Damnation" in the last edition of the Wordeater. The Wordeater is hardly known for such articles, especially such a malicious one. I was under the vague impression that this particular style of writing had gone out of vogue with the radicalism of a few years ago. Mr. McGuire managed to deliver some nicely turned phrases and a series of broadsides against the President and the "system," but nothing important came of it --- only a damnation of the country in general and of Mr. Ford in particular.

Sometimes I take a rather dismal view of the country's affairs myself, but never so dismal as to conclude that we are being exploited by a tiny elite of corporate and governmental heads. In our capitalistic economy it is true that there are such things as producers, consumers and profits. But profits are not synonomous with rip-offs, nor is being a consumer synonomous with being exploited. Experience has shown us quite the opposite, that our capitalistic system has helped to bring us more prosperity than any other nation on the planet.

I do agree, however, that more should be done to reduce unemployment, but I feel that Mr. McGuire is wrong to resurrect the ancient scapegoat of the "military-industrial complex" and to somehow insinuate that the Pentagon feasts while H.E.W. starves. I personally feel that the current hodge podge of Welfare programs could be combined into a more equitable and comprehensive plan which would cost far less to operate. At the same time I feel that the money spent on defense could also be spent more wisely. One program should not be favored to the exclusion of the other.

What things I have written above concern only a very small part of Mr. McGuire's article, most of which simply kept repeating his opinion that Mr. Ford was a leader lacking in ability, insight, or enlightenment. Perhaps Mr. McGuire should be reminded that presidents are men, not messiahs, and that the demands of the presidency outstrip not only the abilities of Mr. Ford, but also those of anyone who might ever aspire to the office.

Contrary to what Mr. McGuire stated in his article, this government functions not "...to maintain an environment conducive to profit for the corporations while keeping the governed in harness as consumers." Instead our government is designed to protect our liberty and happiness. We are not the hapless victims of big business and big government; this is a democratic nation, one where changes can be made. But if we remain apathetic and resign ourselves to a philosophy of non-concern or cynicism, then our democratic rights and privieges will certainly be taken from us.

I certainly hope that the sentences I have written will not be misconstrued as being directed at Mr. McGuire personally. Should it appear so (even to the smallest degree) it was inadvertant and due to my own inability to express myself clearly. One point I would like to make is that, in my opinion, page-long articles should have some substance, should be written clearly and concisely, and should lead to a reasonable conclusion.

J. C. Baldacci

REFLECTIONS ON AFRO-AMERICAN LITERATURE

Have I grown apathetic? You bet your ass I have! You got problems, buddy, I got problems; it's our heritage. The overall handling becomes old hat! The dramatics become too typical. My initial emotion-filled response dulled to a mere trickle. It's not that I don't care, but, what can I do? No! Wait a minute, that's a cop out. Oh well, I guess I don't care.

Is this a half-hearted attempt to be equal or does suffering turn us on? Are we victims of over-exposure, so overly exposed that we don't even give a damn? Whatever, I'm still not moved.

Perhaps it's their fault. Ah yes! There's a real cop out! It's all *your* fault; you've told me so long, I *gave* up listening.

In the beginning God created *people* and they promptly started putting labels on each other. Don't Blame Me. I wasn't there. You make me feel guilty when I wasn't there. But I *feel* guilty. Ah hah, so that's *your trick*. It's a dog eat dog world and *we're* both eating, eating each *other*.

Christ, I'm starting to *sound like* the rest of 'em. Ah, *there's the rub*. I GUESS I'M IN A DOWN MOOD!

- Margit Naden -

"ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN"

Four years after the Watergate break-in, a movie shows us the beginning of the series of consequences covered in every American news medium for more than three years.

The movie is done in documentary style, yet treated as a mystery. I found it so suspenseful that I was surprised when the two and a half hours were over and the lights came on.

Many people must have been as puzzled as I to realize it was the sharp observation of a reporter that started the stone rolling and how easily every step in the investigation could have been stopped right at the beginning -- indeed, the probe was threatened many times more afterward.

About a fourth through the film, after Washington Post reporters Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward get permission to follow the story, the action picks up speed, and one event races the next.

Who is Deep Throat? must be the question everybody asked coming out of the theater. (The last week in April, incidentally, Rolling Stone magazine published an article naming Robert Bennett, a top CIA official, as Woodward's secret source. Bennett, of course, denies it.) Without Deep Throat's help, Woodward would have lost the right direction several times.

I'm sure more people will read the book after seeing the movie; if not the story's facts, then the mystery of Deep Throat will be a good selling point. Few men could have been as high in government as he to have such inside information.

The press was attacked often during the Watergate scandal. It was accused of lying and conspiracy against the president.

The movie is an excellent rebuttal. It shows how seriously and carefully the investigation was undertaken. According to Post policy, at least two sources must back up major assertions. Suspense increased every time the reporters found another major fact and needed supporting evidence. Each revelation led them higher and higher into the Republican organization and toward the White House staff itself. And they were amazed and almost afraid to find where it would lead.

Two scenes portrayed that feeling very well. Bernstein and Woodward knocked on the door of Hugh Sloan's home, former treasurer of the Committee to Reelect the President. Ambitious and desperate for more information, the reporters tell Sloan's wife the interview would be for his own good. "No it wouldn't," she answered. "You're right," Woodward agreed. And they realized right there that these people knew, too, the futures of their lives were involved -- Woodward and Bernstein's success and Hugh Sloan's reputation and career.

Carl Bernstein had to cope with the same hesitance when he finally met one of the committee's bookkeepers. She, too, helped steer them in the right direction, which was very courageous considering her job and privacy were endangered.

If this movie were fiction, critics might say the story was too much of a fairy tale: two young and inexperienced reporters developing a story of national importance, one on the verge of being fired, both of them now millionaires and celebrities in their field. Not every newspaper management would have stood behind its reporters this way, and the film showed the internal conflict well.

I believe the film deserves high credits for the acting, the screenplay and historical value.

The director seemed as careful to avoid sensationalism as Woodward, Bernstein and the Washington Post were in conducting their investigation.

- Ross Stewart -

LITTLE FLOWERS ON THE BEACH

Ocean waves upon the beaches,
Mid-day sun glares down and bleaches.
Endless wandering on the land,
footsteps of death on the sand.
Traveling after you tire,
another yet gets you higher.
Another beer will hit the spot,
your brain turns into microdot.
Being lonely as a leach,
little flowers on the beach.

void where plasmoid

Urma had lost interest in surrogate substitution of the contemplative sort and was being inattentive in ease of an autonomic struggle with filing an alkaline particulate study of collapsium properties. The multiscreen moniter in front of her displayed virtually unreadible and illegible rosters of templates designed for temperature control. The templates were part of a control bank designed to moniter temperature on hull plates made of Colphasium, a collapsed metal alloy employed all around her on the solar probe. The templates were illegible because of increasing heat. Sweat ran down her face from underneath the visor of her radiation skull cap.

The uncomfortable failure of the air conditioning hardly mattered to her since she knew that in four hours they would be on the other side of the sun to rendezvous with a ship from Antares. The courier would key in computer memory thru umbilical link and she could peruse the documentation of her strange and recent inheritance.

Perhaps the subspace link was clear she thought idly.

Sweat.

Flouresca Willflower had never felt sweat. Her minute quantities of persperation dissipated quickly into the nutrient solution of her bottle without a trace. The micron memory built into the base of her brain ran the life support system of the probe simply as she breathed thru genetically mutated gills. She eliminated thru an umbilical filter which efficiently processed her waste.

Flouresca Willflower had no arms and legs.

She stirred slightly in her sleep as Urma employed the subconscious portion of her mind to engage subspace conversation with the Antares ship.

The fiber optic walls around her in the central bridge were alive with blooming flowers as she slept with eyes half open. Occasionally her retinal pattern was gently stimulated by lines of colored dashes which ran up the wall in front of her like bubbles and escaped thru the ceiling. These were not unlike braille to her in their information content.

She was as yet unaware of the collapsium hull failure.

Urma had dissolved the template analysis in favor of a translated communication from three six foot long pink ants broadcast from their courier ship now in tight solar orbit. The ants had wet gummy holes where their eyes should have been and were covered with shaggy florescent fur. She thought they were cute and liked to talk to them.

They were talking about Burma Shave which the ants used to shave delicate alien patterns on their indelicate alien bodies. Everybody on their planet used it and they had come to make Urma very exotically rich.

Her father had made his fortune at interstellar trade.

An uncharted sunspot on solar entry had caused some unexpected turbulence and had caused slight damage to the hill over the life support machinery. Flouresca had been cushioned by the heavy liquid suspension within her bell-shaped bottle, but Urma had sustained a bad bruise on her hip when she was thrown against the air lock handle in the zero gravity microwave bath where she had been enjoying a bit of sonic stimulation while she took a swim break from her watch.

A new phenomena was at that unlikely point in time discovered by the crew of solar probe one. Amoeboid creatures composed of solar plasma and capable of movement under heavy gravity at the center of the sun began to curiously surround the intruding ship and one of these living envelopes of hot gas organized by the lifeforce within it as a plasma envelope put out a pseudopod limb generated just for the occasion of touching the ship at its weakened point where it attempted some form of felt communication.

The molecular structure of the damaged hull plate collapsed completely under this new stress and it dissapeared with a metallic strained sigh leaving a large hole in the side of the spherical ship and under heavy gravities the entire thing began to fill quickly with solar plasma. Amid the melting mass of metal consoles and vaporizing human flesh at the center of the bridge Flouresca's bottle cracked slightly, the pressurized fluid and blood from her injuries sustained by concussion oozing from her faltering metabolism and leaving her the last to die, her last thought an efficient calculation of warning which even at the lightspeed of her thoughts was never to be displayed on consoles all over the ship in the bright red light of warning, "Gravitational force and temperature at m a x i m u m t o l e r a n c e . "

- Ross Stewart -
The California Kid

HOLD YOUR BULL

So, you think you're big stuff.
You run the whole show
and let everyone know
that you're the boss,
or so you think.
You scream and shout
and try to use your clout
to get things done
the way you want.
You try to do this to me
but you don't seem to see
that with me, this doesn't work.
You see, I'm no jerk,
I am me
and I'm free,
and there isn't a thing you can do about it.
With me, you have no hold,
and in many ways you've been told.
I thought that you would learn
that with me, you can't burn
or push me around.
I've put up with alot of bull all my life,
but I've stopped it like a slash of a knife,
I take no more.
When you bull, keep it hid,
'cause you know you don't mess with the "California Kid."

THE FLOWERS

Blest be the flowers of paradise
That betokens the ways of man,
The fragrance of heaven in disguise
Suggests the all-powering plan

Were it not for the flowers
To soften the hardest of hearts,
And were it not for the showers
Each playing their own gracious parts.

Weary not of the blooms of the clay
Turning solitudes into joys,
Enhancing beauty and glad array,
Ejecting perfumes, grace and poise.

Were it not for the flowers
Beckoning the honest way of life,
Bespeaking kindness in life's sad bowers,
Erasing gloom and darkened strife.

Continue the flowers I pray,
To gladden the hearts and souls of man.
Continue them eternally o'er the way,
Symbol of majesty, power, and plan.

Were it not for the flowers
Illuminating pureness and love,
Lengthening moments into hours
And the heavens above.

KISS KISS

Strobe lights a flashin',
Gene is a dancin',
ya know he gets down all the time.
Criss is playin',
bodies swayin',
he helps them keep the time.
Ace's face,
all over the place,
he sure enough gets around.
Paul's dancin',
seems so romancin',
his sounds all over town.

Don't ya know,
they'll give ya a show,
they're life is Rock 'n' Roll.
Hear the sound,
all around,
they really want ya to know.
Rock 'n' Roll,
is in their soul,
an' thats how they make their dough.
Hear their song,
they get along,
they give ya a hell of a show.

- Ross Stewart -
The California Kid

YOUNG BLOOD IN D MALL

It was one of those average days at JJC, people running to classes, talking to each other, and sitting around D Mall.

There was one student who was sitting in D Mall, watching everyone go by, and daydreaming about doing all kinds of magical things. (He always wanted to be supernatural.) He was an average guy, long hair, glasses, and lonely.

He was sitting there, daydreaming, when a funny feeling came over him. (It also came around him, I guess. The feeling was heavy and it didn't want to break his neck.) He felt like he had been given an injection of electricity and great knowledge, and chrome bracelets, two inches wide, appeared on his wrists. For some reason, he knew what they were for, and he smiled. They gave him every kind of supernatural power imaginable, and some that aren't.

He wanted to test out his powers, so he walked to the middle of D Mall and stood there. His body suddenly floated off the floor and stopped at about the second floor. Everyone around him stood and stared at him, as he tried some tricks.

He flew from the floor to the ceiling a couple of times, then he flew up and down the corridor, smashing the cement pillars as he jetted back and forth. He was satisfied with the flying bit, so he landed back in the middle of D Mall.

He wanted a change of clothes, so he banged his wrists together. When he did this, there was a blinding flash of light, and he stood there in chrome. (He liked chrome.) The chrome clothes were the brightest I've seen, almost blinding.

He then held out his hands, and a Gibson Les Paul appeared in his hands. Then he pointed to the floor behind him, and a giant Ampeg V-4 appeared behind him, taking up all the space in D Mall. He played a few tunes, and the Les Paul and Ampeg disappeared. He noticed that while he played, he had shattered all the glass around him. With all the glass broken, it started to get cold, so he snapped his fingers and all the glass went back to its original place.

He heard someone ask who he was, so he showed them. He stood in a karate fighting stance, his right fist at his waist, and his left arm extended. Then he gave a yell, sort of like Bruce Lee's, and thrust his right arm out and drew his left fist to his waist. When he did this, a bolt of blue electricity shot out of his right fist, and burned his nickname in the wall.

Then he gave us a little show. First, he held his hands about an inch apart. When he did this, a blue spark shot from one hand to the other, and then there was a constant arc of blue electricity going from one hand to the other. Then he moved his hands farther apart, and the electricity grew bigger and changed to all kinds of colors. He did a bit where the electricity flowed from one hand to the other, and he spelled out people's names with the sparks.

He got tired of the electricity bit after a while, so he did some stuff with fire. He did the usual stuff. He breathed it, made it come out of his hands, and engulfed himself in it. It was your every day fire trick.

Then he saw someone sitting in a corner, all alone. This person was in bad shape. He, (or she, I couldn't tell) was all kinds of ugly and fat, body was all twisted, and lacking half a nose. Well, this kid with the powers looked at him, and the kid stopped breathing. Then, there was a white glow that surrounded him. All of a sudden, a ray of white light came out of his eyes, and went into the ugly kid's eyes. Then the dude held his arms out, his palms facing the ugly kid, and the white light flared and grew very intense, followed by a large boom. After that, the white light was gone, and the ugly kid was almost perfect. (The kid with the powers didn't want the ex-ugly kid looking better than him.)

The kid with the powers, (I'll call him "Young Blood" to save on words) turned his head to the right and looked at this one blond lady. (Kind of foxy, but she was a little messy.) He looked at her, pointed at her, and he spoke for the first time. His voice was deep, and had a sound of power in it. He said to her, "You are blessed.", and her clothes changed from rags to the best jeans and halter top outfit I ever saw. He also gave her make up, and she was a fox, a super fox. He knew everything about everybody, and later told me she was poor and couldn't afford new clothes and make up. He told me that when he changed her, her clothes and make up at ther house turned to vapor, and replaced by the very best of clothes and make up. (He put new tires on her car and rebuilt the engine at the same time. He told me he was going to fly over to her house late at night and wash and wax her car. It was kind of grubby looking.)

Well, all the girls in D Mall crowded around him when they saw him do this, and wanted to get to know him better. (He could read minds too.) I think he got a little mad, because he grew to be ten times his normal size, and started getting down on them. He spoke to them with his deep voice; only this time it sounded like he was talking through a reverb. He told them that they never paid any attention to him before he got his powers, and he wasn't even going to look at them. He waved his hand and the girls were thrown against the walls

He slapped his bracelets together and returned to normal size, almost. He told me it was fun, but I guess Young Blood didn't want everyone to

know all about this, because he erased it from everyone's mind, except mine. He slapped his bracelets together again and the bracelets turned invisible, and he returned to be like he used to be, except he still had the powers.

Now, he sits in D Mall, watching everyone go by. And when the poor girl he made foxy goes by, he smiles. The only time he shows his power now is when he's alone or just with me around. But, even though he doesn't show his power, he uses them all the time, and nobody, except me, knows about it.

ALDONZA

It has been a year
since I have fallen in love
with a character who came across very sincere.
Standing on a shaky platform
at an uncertain height,
I followed her around with my light
for over eight nights.
Linda and Sybil both played this part
that is fresh in my mind,
and still in my heart.
I felt something I had never felt before,
a feeling, an experience that had
almost sent me falling to the floor.
This feeling I can't explain,
but I think it will never happen again.
I believe Quixote had things right
when he looked upon her,
but saw someone different in his sight.
He didn't do as we do,
looking at someone's skin,
but through the skin at the real person,
which was all that mattered to him.
I, in a way, have tried to think like him,
looking at a person, and not their skin.
And I have found different when looking through skin,
I see a lady, and Aldonza within.
I feel different
toward those that played the part,
something special for making me feel
as I do in my heart.
But I feel that if I had my way,
I would leave life, and take Don's part in the play.
Yes, I would just be ink on paper,
being in a play as a big part,
but Aldonza would then be real in my heart.

SITTIN' HERE

Well I'm sittin' here at work
listenin' to the AM radio,
ya know I'm thinkin' I'm a jerk
'cause there's gotta be someplace better to go.
Puttin' in a sixteen'hour day
makin' sure this place doesn't get robbed,
I know the time and work ain't gonna show in my pay
an' I think I should quit this lousy job.
I really don't know what I'm doin' here
waistin' away the day,
should be partyin' an' drinkin' beer
'cause that's how I want to make my pay.
But I'm sittin' here listenin' to the radio
wishin' I was up on stage,
playin' you some rock 'n' roll
an' puttin' a smile on your face.

- Ross Stewart -
The California Kid

COME TO THEM

Come all you fans,
give 'em a hand,
that's what they want to hear.

Sing an' dance,
strut an' prance,
ya hear them far an' near.

Don't be late,
don't hesitate,
you'll be missin' all the fun.

Rock 'n' Roll,
will fill your soul,
you'll hear it by the ton.

Come to them, people,
ya know what I mean,
they'll Rock 'n' Roll ya all night long.
Come to them, people,
ya know what I mean,
they'll bring your soul to bleed.
They'll bring your soul to bleed.

- Joseph Rozbesky -

Lyre and sire
The need in me
To know the seed in me
That keeps leading
me through this hell

And sometimes the only way to progress
is to let the rock roll backward,
and walk up alone.....

- Joseph Rozbesky -

ANOTHER CREATION MYTH.....
VOL.2chapter23

At first there was nothing....Or the lack of something. So a potential existed...Due to this negative force created by the lack...

So the unbalance, itself a force of some proportions, had to rebalance. Attracting something:

-9876543210123456789+ the zero is not a void, it has potential.

So the name Zero was formulated, just for a handle, so people could carry it around.... Something to relate to.

Contrary to popular belief, at the time, A witness was needed to see and understand the potential of this nothing...As it is the point from which all emanates in any direction....

Various forms looked up and saw the sun rise and fall, Most slept through the night....

Until one, a math major or poet of sorts, realized that this energy existed. Furthermore it was the basis of all he knew, an energy without direction but with no boundaries....

Then this witness deduced that with or without our senses, with which we interpret, and our minds, which record for us, this universe would not exist.

That which was trying all along to be said:
We are the zero point.

- Joseph Rozbesky -

RUNNING WITH THE STEPPENWOLF
(A POETIC BOOK REPORT)

Oh to live in the realm where I am not...and still be.

Once found, it's never lost
Once known, it's never needed
Once identified, it's never remembered.

Only one step outside of life's reality. To be found and lost at the same instant.

It dwells one step beyond the point where Steppenwolf's Harry Haller saw himself as both identities without being either.

One step beyond the neverending infinity of observers.

Its realm is eluded to the void before thought's creation.

So Harry, will we ever get to that point as long as we, humanity, continue to be the observer of this universe and its creation?

The light is not the source, but only the product.

So thought is not the mind but only its reflection observed by itself.

So possibly you can understand that this paper has no reason to be. And if you think that we - you, the reader, and I - know where this point is, could then both be in common?

And would it be the creator of all ways and reasons?

Harry, we stretch our minds in every direction looking for a way around or through to the source of creation. But will we ever make it?

Oh to live in the realm of creation, and laugh at life's little joke. "I" can't live there.

Or all we can try to do is think of what and where it can be.

Many are the forms, paths, directions that try to take "I" toward its infinite edge.

But can the mind take us past the point of its creation?

But all these words, are they not guided? Their source? Their reasons?

INTRODUCTION

I am throughly convinced that
we have met before....
Not in this life for sure
But could have been ten before
I wasn't a warrior nor you a sorceress,
nor did we live on borrowed time
or memories.
Something I recall about getting enjoyment out of the simpler things
of life....
the color of a feather,
a small girl's smile,
Like the quietness of soft falling rain.
Or a wool shirt on a cold damp day.
Or was it just the love given freely
to all that received it.

I want to know you

LOVE SONG TO YOU

I never did thank you.
I could give my love as thanks.

But that would be giving as a gift
something that should not be given.

For it is always there,
And only needs to be
received.

- Steve Turan -

WINDS OF CHANGE

The winds of change have blown into my life.
A calm of soul moved, with the leaving of my wife.
At first a breeze, but soon a storm that rent us.
I fear destruction in the stirring tempest.

At dawn, love was in the sun's warm glow,
But it soon waned in heat, to wither low,
To lie alone in the day's bright light
And cry mid tears in the darkening night.

A soft sound, off far, that seems to poise,
But soon moves near and then is noise
That screams and beats itself to thunder
To take our love, tear it asunder.

The warmth, in spring, of the first soft rain
Can change its guise to bring us pain
And like love's loss, become abhorent
And quench a life in its furious torrent.

A lily, alive in a placid pond,
Somehow is pushed and so moves on,
To wander its path alone like me
Toward solitary death in the raging sea.

Soft snow that lays so clean and pure,
In time will lose its white veneer
And darken, as love sometimes may,
To wait and bleed for another day.

Chill comes once, a man stands rigid,
The air, like love, may then grow frigid
To freeze his soul to its very core
And kill his warmth forevermore.

The winds of change have blown into my life.
A calm of soul moved, with the leaving of my wife.
At first a breeze, but soon a storm that rent us.
I fear destruction in the stirring tempest.

- Lezlie Gray -

SORRY, SONNY

Mama told me you been callin today,
I ask if it was true.
"It's true," she said, "he's been callin you."

Sonny, what got into you,
Nothing I said's sunk into your head.
You got to find someone else instead;
You just don't have no money!

What got into you, boy,
What got into you, Sonny,
Don't you know I don't want you,
Because you got no money.

Yes, Son, I'm right when I call you child,
Though you've reached the age of twenty-five,
You got no job, no home, just walk the streets,
Like a cop on his daily beat,
And you ain't got no money.

I wish you'd quit hanging around.
Sometimes my feelings for you get out of bounds,
Wonder where you are or if you're hungry,
But I stop it every time, because I remember,
That you just don't got no money.

Someday I'll be living in the country,
with the tall trees, flowers in the meadow,
And with someone who's got money.

- Pat Bohler -

WHEN IT RAINS.....

Winter was still apparent in the landscape of leafless trees and barren fields. The main street of the little town was puddled by the constant beating rain. The grain elevator, at the west end, was obliterated in a thick grey mist. The stores, along both sides of the street, had boarded windows and doors. They were rotting reminders of the depression. A blue and red neon sign blinked Purina from the dirty front window of Nate Johnson's feed store.

Across the street from the feed store, Junior Stahl had just finished filling the tank of Mike Hensen's Chevy pick-up. Junior owned the little white Texaco station that was plastered all over with big, tin Prince Albert Tobbacco and Dr. Pepper signs.

"Three fifty, Mike," Junior said, adjusting his yellow rain hat. "What you up to today?"

"Going out to see Frank and the boys." Mike handed the money to Junior. "Ain't been out there since Linda's funeral."

"Give old Frank my best, and take it easy on those side roads," Junior yelled, running for the station.

Mike headed east. The beating rain made the going slow. Mike didn't mind because he was reluctant to face his younger brother anyway. He remembered the look on Frank's face two weeks earlier when he'd been told that Linda was dead. Linda had died in an auto-truck wreck on the interstate. A guy named Snyder died in the car with her. He was a Nabisco salesman from Chicago. No one really knows what they were doing together. Imaginations had been running wild.

"Damn," Mike thought, "Why Frank?"

Linda never had liked being a farmer's wife. She let her bitterness show in every action. Her children lived on fried egg sandwiches and canned soup. The house went for months without being cleaned. Frank and the boys lived in the same filthy coveralls week after week. Linda, though, she was something else. She always looked as if she stepped out of a fashion magazine. In public she enjoyed embarrassing her family. Her favorite way was to call them "Farmer Frank and his dirty clods." Then she would laugh, a high pitched cackle. No, Mike did not like Linda, and he wasn't sorry she was dead.

Mike turned into the lane leading to the farm. The chevy eased sideways through the muddy barnyard to the back of the house. Mike jumped out into the rain, ran up the steps to the back porch, and went on into the kitchen.

"Hey, Frank, where the hell are ya?" His voice echoed back to him through the house. It was quiet and cold. Mike shivered. He went into the livingroom and yelled upstairs.

"Frank, Jim, Tommy." There was no answer. He walked to the steps leading to the second story and was about to yell again, but as he looked up, he saw something that made him stop. On the landing, he saw Tommy's red head and his small arm dangling limp on the second step.

"Oh my God," Mike groaned, racing up the steps. Tommy was lying on his side facing the hall. The carpet in front of him was matted with blood.

Mike followed the trail down the hall to the door of Frank's bedroom. Once inside the door, he saw Jimmy, face across the bed. Surrounding him on the spread was a large black stain. Frank was sitting on the floor behind the bed. His back was against the bed and his feet pointed toward the partially open window. His lap was filled with blood and he stared blankly at the rain soaking his feet and the floor beneath him.

Mike turned away. He knew he could not help them. He ran, and as he did, heard his own hideous screams. As he ran into the hall an intense cold came over him. He stopped. A strange freezing wind filled the hall. It seemed to be coming from both ends of the hall at the same time. Above the howling of the air as it rushed past him he heard her laugh, that high-pitched cackling laughter.

From out of the wind something struck him forcefully in the chest. He stumbled backward, clutching his throbbing wound, until his back was against the wall. As he slumped to the floor opposite Tommy, he heard the laughter once again. The wind stopped and Mike closed his eyes. All that was left was the sound of the rain on the roof.

- Pat Bohler -

RUBY: AN AMERICAN GEM

Forty miles west of Joliet, Illinois, and a few miles south, is the small community of Marseilles. It lies nestled on the bluffs and spreads across the plain of the Illinois River Valley. There, today, a block from the river, one finds the LaSalle County Project for senior citizens. There I found the home of Ruby Johnson.

As I knocked on her door, I noticed the lush green plants in a flower box beneath her front window. The window itself was full of flowers and plants.

Ruby answered the door with a smile on her face and a dust mop in her hand. She apologized for the mop explaining that she was just dusting up some bath powder from her bathroom floor. It was 9 in the morning and she already had her bed made, her breakfast dishes washed and put away, her grocery list made, her rent check written and she had taken out the garbage.

As I ran the vacuum cleaner over already gleaming floors in the two rooms, Ruby dusted her furniture. I ran the vacuum by choice as I found it unsettling to have a 93 year old woman working around me while I sat in a chair.

I watched her as she moved the couch away from the wall so she could run the dust mop under it. About five feet tall, she has bright clear blue eyes and pure white hair pulled back neatly and twisted into a knot. Her face is round and pleasant. She only wears glasses when she goes out or reads, still has her own teeth and is proud of them. She is in good health, all 93 years, although she has been nursing an ulcer and a case of shingles for nearly a year. She walks slowly and carefully but shuns the support of walker or cane because 'Dr. Mac says, 'Ruby, you got to keep those legs moving and take care of yourself or you're going to end up in a nursing home.'"

So she makes those legs move. She doesn't go out often but she often has a houseful of company, "The old ladies from the project," she says with a giggle. She enjoys teasing them a bit. Ruby is the oldest resident in the project, in fact the oldest in all of LaSalle County's senior citizens projects.

She has a sharp memory and loves to tell tales of her life and of her family.

Her American heritage began in 1632 with her father's family. Captain Edward Johnson came to America from England. He settled at Charlestown, Massachusetts, where he was a member of the Puritan community. He later moved to Waburn, Massachusetts, where he died.

Her great-great-grandfather, Nathaniel Johnson, was at the crossing of the Delaware with George Washington's troops. He was wounded at the Battle of Trenton and died two days later at Valley Forge. His widow and her three small children were among the survivors of the Wyoming Valley Massacre of the American Revolution.

Her great-grandfather, Oliver Johnson, was one of the surviving children. He was a veteran of the War of 1812 and migrated to Illinois with his family in 1820 by way of Shawneetown. He settled first in Sangamon County, moving later to Tazewell County where he died.

Her grandfather, John Johnson, married Mary Bloyd in 1825 in Springfield, Illinois. He was a carpenter and a wheelwright. He helped to construct the first frame house in Springfield. He moved his family to Rooks Creek Township in Livingston County in 1833. He was the third settler in the township when only fifty settlers lived in the entire county. He arrived late for clearing and planting, so it was a tough first winter. He hunted and trapped and walked thirty miles to Ottawa to trade his furs for supplies. He built a saw mill and used the lumber from his own land to construct his home on a hill overlooking the creek. The house still stands today, weathered to a silver grey. This home was once visited by that most famous circuit rider, Abraham Lincoln, (his old friend from the Springfield days) and that friendliest of all Indians to the Illinois settler, Chief Shabbona.

Her father, Oliver Johnson, told of an incident he had as a child of about six. He was in the forest gathering gum when he heard a loud commotion. Looking around he saw a band of Indians bearing down on him on horseback. One of the Indians swooped him up and carried him off, only moments later to drop him safely in front of the house. The Indian was Chief Shabbona. Oliver married Hannah Reynolds Sellman while he was on furlough from his duties with Company A, 17th Illinois Cavalry during the Civil War. He saw action west of the Mississippi chasing Quantrill. Oliver and Hannah were the parents of 12 children. Four died as infants, their sons never married and their five daughters all married and raised families, only three remaining in Illinois.

Ruby is the only member of her generation still living on both sides of her family.

Her mother's family came from England in 1658. Edward and John Sellman, Catholics, saw their parents murdered in England and themselves sold as Bond slaves in Virginia. When Charles II restored their lands, the eldest, Edward, went back to England. John remained in America and was granted several thousand acres of land in Anne

Arundel County, Maryland. He was a member of the Episcopal Church.

At the time of the Revolution, Ruby's great-great-grandfather, Adam Sellman and his sons, fought with the Patriots. After the Revolution he moved to Brooke County, Ohio, which is now in West Virginia.

Her great-grandfather, John Sellman, freed his slaves and moved west. In Brown County, Ohio, he married Hannah Reynolds. He fought in the War of 1812 near the present day town of Toledo. He was the father of 16 children. In 1852 he left his older children and moved with his wife and the four youngest. They settled at Rooks Creek, just one mile down the road from the Johnson farm.

Hannah Reynolds Sellman Johnson, Ruby's mother, was the youngest daughter of John Sellman. Ruby was her youngest daughter after she married Oliver Johnson.

Ruby married William Grant Davis in Cornell, Illinois, on November 4, 1903. They were the parents of four children. Glenn died at the age of 13. The others are Iris Bowers of Ottawa, Claude of Joliet, and Jean Maubash, formerly of Ottawa, now of Joliet. They farmed until 1923 when they moved to Cornell. Grant worked in construction until just after W.W. II. In 1965 they moved to Marseilles. In 1966, after 63 years of marriage, Grant died. He was 94 and Ruby was 83.

Grant is remembered best for the zest with which he spun yarns about his life. He would sit for hours puffing his pipe, his lap full of grandchildren, telling about wild bareback horse rides, covered wagon trip to the Dakotas, hiding under bridges as Indian war parties passed overhead. He knew how to make Prairie Chicken soup, and spoke of prairie dog colonies that stretched for miles, their burrows posing a serious danger to horses. He would chuckle that the jack rabbits were so big the Dakota children rode them to school. Always the Indian stories were favorites. He had dozens of them, Ruby remembers.

Ruby picked up his talent for story-telling. Her great-grandchildren love to hear her hairraising rendition of "The Buggy Wreck." She can't recall the exact date, but it was just after W.W. I began. She was driving from Cornell back to the farm. She had her three oldest children with her. They were babies. The buggy was pulled by two horses. Queen, a dapple grey, and Bird, a sleek black Arabian. Queen was high spirited and was easily spooked. Just as they mounted a rise on the gravel road, a calf frolicking in a pasture along the side of the road kicked its back heels in the air and bawled. Queen reared back and took off. The harder Ruby tried to control her, the faster she went. There was a small curve at the bottom of the hill, and as Queen took the curve lickety-split the buggy went into the ditch, tipped over into the barbed wire fence, dragged a great distance along the fence. Ruby had several broken ribs, a punctured lung, and a nearly severed right ear. Two year old Claude had his throat cut from ear to ear but survived. The other two children were thrown clear, receiving only minor cuts and bruises. True, this story doesn't have the terror of our high speed auto wrecks but does suggest that those "safe and sane buggy days" never really existed.

Ruby washed her clothes in a tub with home made lye soap for cleaning. She scrubbed the clothes on a board, hung them on a line, then ironed with a flat iron heated on the cast iron stove in her kitchen. Her water was carried in buckets from a well nearly a block away. She thrived without indoor plumbing, dishwashers, microwave ovens. In her quiet hours she sewed, first by hand then on a treadle Singer, which she still owns. She did needlework, crocheting, tatting, and embroidering until arthritis forced her to give it up several years ago.

Her roots are ten generations deep in this country. She has no use for any other. America has been good to her and she is thankful.

So there in Marseilles, Illinois, lives a little bit of Americana all packed into a spry 93 year old woman. As I left her warm company I felt a sadness that our time together passed so quickly. I was sad also that this year, when we celebrate our Bicentennial, we celebrate things instead of people. So many living stories to be told that no one cares to listen to. But Ruby waved good bye from her front window, with a smile on her face and a twinkle in her eye.

- Chris Schroeder -

MAGNUM FORCE -- NONSENSE

"The Killer Society," an article in the September, 1975 edition of Nation, points out: "More Americans were murdered from 1970-1974 than were killed in Vietnam." Two-thirds of these murders were with guns, 92% with handguns. The murder rate for the United States has more than doubled since 1968.

Cities, sexes, and ages varied in these murders. The major nonvariable has been the handgun. "Every 19 minutes an American is killed with a handgun," according to an article in Reader's Digest in 1974.

Even the most rabid pro-gun man must admit that the above statistics prove that handguns are dangerous. In the following essay I will show why I believe handguns are a threat to our society, and why stricter gun control laws are necessary and practical in Illinois.

An article in the Chicago Tribune, in November of 1975, described Illinois Representative Phillip Crane's opinion on gun control. He is against gun control for this reason: "I take the citizen's right to keep and bear arms literally....there is no way to restrict a criminal's access to guns, so all you will be doing is potentially jeopardizing the security of innocent people." But are you innocent people really secure with a gun? In a March, 1974 edition of Reader's Digest, Stephen Oberbeck wrote an article which points out that The National Rifle Association puts out a pamphlet called, "What Every Woman Should Know About Self Defense." The pamphlet states that in cities or towns where it is legal "a firearm is excellent protection, provided you are trained to use it properly and safely." But how does a terrified woman, no matter how good she is with targets, shoot a burglar "properly and safely?"

Suppose that someone came to rob you, and you have a gun hidden close by for protection. As you reach for it to defend yourself, the intruder will more than likely take a shot at you for his protection. Also the American Public Health Association did a study on mishaps of civilian gun owners, coming to the conclusion that "a gun kept by a civilian for protection is six times more likely to kill a family member or friend than an intruder or attacker."

Therefore, I believe guns are not much of a safeguard for "otherwise defenseless women."

I also believe it possible to keep guns away from the criminals. For example, U.S. News and World Report states in 1975, that a Philidelphia gun buyer must pass certain requirments before obtaining a permit. Since 1965, gun buyers have been required to furnish "fingerprints and a photograph" in order to obtain the gun permit. They must also pass a test on gun use, safety, and laws before acquiring a handgun. In one year, this plan weeded out almost two hundred people with records of robbery and ninety-six people with police records for concealed weapons.

The same article states that in in Toledo, Ohio, once known as the "gun capital of the Midwest," a similar plan was introduced. Toledo's yearly handgun murder rate has dropped 22%, since this plan was implemented.

Why haven't the Congressmen here in Illinois passed stricter gun control laws?

According to an article in the Chicago Tribune by Wesley Hartzell, the main obstacle is The National Rifle Association. The N.R.A. is said to have over one million members, many who write angry letters to congressmen to oppose the gun control bills. In an article in U.S. News and World Report, February, 1975, Adlai Stevenson explained why many congressmen take the letters very seriously. "They make it clear the writer is basically a one-issue voter who seems to say, 'Vote against me on gun control and you'll lose my vote, no matter what else you do.'"

I believe it would be desirable and practical to cut down the crime and death by gun in Illinois if a plan like those in Philidelphia and Toledo were adopted.

- Scott Cheffer -

ROSIE, THE METER MAID

Now, Rosie is a Meter Maid,
And does her job with flair,
Within a minute she'll appear,
Her duty to declare.

Her tie is straight, her hair just so,
Her nails, they always shine.
Her suit is clean, her shoes just gleam,
She gets to work on time.

Rosie, the ticketer,
A servant of the law,
Keeps streets safe of vagrant cars,
Quickest ticketer you ever saw.

She keeps a pen and tiny pad,
Indulging in some play,
By noting all the silly things
That bumpers have to say.

You're safe if you're from out-of-state.
She knows you'll never pay.
It's not the way to play the role
Of hostess, anyway.

She stops each day at Ann's Cafe
To get a bite to eat,
And drinks a cup of Boston Tea,
Then back to hit the street.

Rosie, the ticketer,
A servant of the law,
Keeps streets safe of vagrant cars,
Quickest ticketer you ever saw.

Now if you drive a brand-new Jag,
Or Bug of antique fame,
A Cadillac or white Mark Four,
She serves us all the same.

In front of Pete's Pub every night,
She always tags just two,
But over by the Go-Go Hut,
She gets herself a slew.

Every Thursday, sure as hell,
From whom she doesn't know,
A box appears marked "Yours, My Dear."
Twenty tickets, and a rose.

Rosie, the ticketer,
A servant of the law,
Keeps streets safe of vagrant cars,
Quickest ticketer you ever saw.

- John Scott -

THE TRINITY

The night, the cold, and the rain. Depressing conditions thrust upon me. Of this Trinity only one can be converted - the night. For during the night there is beauty. The tables in Vegas are jumping. The teenagers are throbbing through romances, and the disco dancers are alive and well.

But for the most part, and for this event, the night is still Trinity. The Trinity has unorthodox meanings. Each part is dependent upon the other. Depression leads to confusion. Confusion feeds off of self-pity and creates self-destruction. And self destruction terrorizes the victorious and virtuous happiness endowed upon the successful by Trinity's much-desired, well-accepted, and often-accomplished brother - who Trinity refuses to call by name.

So to prevent the reader from infuriating Trinity, remember this is His story. Let us refer to Trinity's brother as Trinity's brother. Now the only way the Trinity can overcome his successful brother is not to permit the night to convert itself. Thus, the Trinity is fighting a time limit. To add to this Trinity calls upon the cold and the rain to insure any inhibitions the night receives.

Since Trinity is a select group which forbids its members to leave and will not allow others to enter, you'd think nobody would want to see Him. The reason He does have frequent visitors from time to time is because curiosity runs deeper than the urge to disregard Him.

The visitors are usually the same. You know 'em. The same invisible characters you read of in the newspapers, hear on the radio, and envision in your mind from television news. For these are the Trinity's best friends. His brother ignores these characters entirely and advises him to do like-wise. But what his brother doesn't possess is the knowledge that envy runs deeper than goodwill.

Of the Trinity's friendly visitors, 90% ask Him to destroy them. The reason "society" does this is because they know that only He can dissipate the lives of those "unwanted" 10%. Their being "unwanted" by "society" only stimulates Trinity into taking them in. Imagine the audacity of "society" telling Trinity, whom they despise, to betray and abandon His friends because they are unaccepted by common standards. Atrocious!

I really despise Trinity. He leaves you miserable and helpless - as far as the outdoors is concerned. Well, He's in for a confrontation tonight because we'd been waiting for this one for a long time. And you had better bet your black chips we're going to do it.

For this occupation, the Trinity is to our benefit. Because nobody chases you but the foolish when He is around.

Dollars and cents have always been enough motivation for doing the risky. All we have to accomplish is a simple B&E job, as the cons say. For weeks we've scientifically plotted our case. Surveillance on a 24 hour basis as to when the store opens and closes, and when the police scans were taken. From an ex-employee we learned where alarm and security systems were located.

The two who we're going to deal with will be our accomplices. They are stationed one mile south and one mile north of the drugstore on Trinity's night, because only from those two directions can anybody gain access. And since the store's at the end of a chain of checkposts, police detection is even more difficult. The reason for one mile checkposts with the use of walkie-talkies is that in the event a police-car is spotted we have ample time to escape the highway-located store. With as many risks as possible eliminated, the time for doers to do and cowards to run has come.

It's now 3 a.m. We have exactly 45 minutes to enter, rob, and escape before the next police scan.

We park Mark's Caddy on a neighborhood street which leaves us with our only chance of getting spotted by having to cross the highway to and from the drugstore. But as long as the spotters aren't police it won't matter, because nobody will care about catching us with Trinity ruling.

Running from the car to the far, shrubbery-enclosed wall (about 1/2 mile) leaves us slightly winded. With only 40 minutes separating us from either prison or our concept of real money, it's no time to even think of getting tired.

"Alright, Mark, place the sack over the pick while I blast it with the sledge." After four hits on the precision-drilled wall a hole opens wide enough to crawl through comfortably.

"Dark in here, John, you got the flashlight."

"No kiddin'. Here. Not there, Mark, this way. Remember - he said they moved the book from the back counter to over by the drugs." We fumble around looking for it. Each nervous minute spent searching seems like 10. But our watches tranquilize our nerves.

"John, over here! I found it! We're rich, baby, rich!"

"Yeah Yeah! Hit me, baby! Quick, throw it in the sack. Let's get the drugs and get the hell outta here. Just scoop for all you're worth." With a walkie-talkie on the inside of his jacket, the bag containing the prescription book strapped to his shoulder, and one arm holding the flashlight - he's using the free arm to help my two-handed attack on filling my bag.

"Five thousand dollars, my man," Mark drawls, "lots of bubblegum with that." He chuckles to me and repeats, "Lots of bubblegum."

"Mark, whadaya gonna do with yours?" I inquire.

"Gonna go out an' blow it all! Take my girl, fill the tank, an' go straight to Shaffer Lake where it's nice an' warm an' sunny." Looking down at his muddy pantlegs, he adds, "And dry."

"That sounds good." I stop grabbing for a moment, straighten up and tell my best friend, "Ya know, I think I'm gonna do like Jack Johnson woulda done. Get in my car, pick up a coupla buddies, and hit the dollies. We'll be all dressed up too, wearing two hundred dollar suits, all bought on my money. Pick me up a Playboy bunny. Jack woulda had one too, but in his day they never had no such thing as Playboy Clubs an' Playboy girls. That Hugh Hefner's quite a thinker, ain't he?" We both start laughing, then resumed our digging. For a moment I think of Mark's statement on Trinity's brother and how muddy footprints will be left. But immediately I recall the time an ex-con once told that they plaster-parised his footprints to track him down. However the ex-con was a step ahead of him that night for he cut out a chunk of his boot-heel with his knife while hiding under a wet, cold outdoor porch. Trinity was the sponsor of this event too. Good ole Trinity - the savior of all the unwanted 10%.

"Jack Johnson, Mark. Drive real fast, look and dress with class, an' blow all your money! Ha Ha Ha! Yep, I'm gonna have one of those foxy Playboy girls right on my lap. Then I'm gonna seduce her by whispering in her ear those magical words, 'Honey, you stick with me an' I'll make you rich an' beautiful tonight after work. Meet me at...' then I'll pull out my wallet and slip her a C note with my room number one, one, one cause I'm number one on a matchbook cover and say, 'Be there for somemore.' An' she'll look at me an' smile an' wink because she knows what I mean. I'm gonna have me a center-fold, Mark. And I'll bring a camera an' take pictures of her. Me an' Miss Play-boy Bunny of the Year! That's good. Let's get outta here. Five thousand dollars! Dogs, never seen that much at one time, have you?"

As Mark tosses the bag with the book out through the hole ahead of him, he strained out a reply of "None." "And neither have I, baby. Say, Mark," I continue, "should we leave the sledge and pick here?"

"Yeah, what the hell. Ain't none of our prints on it and you can bet no one's gonna claim them come tomorrow." That Mark. Always was a sharpie. I remember the times back in high school when we'd play the dumb hillbilly act in Physics. Act just as ignorant and stupid as those rednecks on TV when they're teasing the intellectuals. I flunked 2nd semester and had to take it over again to graduate out of loyal JT East while Mark breezed through with a solid B average.

Our Physics days must be flashing through his memory too because as we're running from the store with bags tightly held in arms and hands like a pit bull's lock on his prey. He calls me by my hill-billy classname, using the Southern dialect we're both so good at saying, "Dunnie, I believe we're meeyonares! Yeee-haw! Robbing goats!"

I'm laughing hysterically. So, just like high school, I add to the Southern conversation by saying, "Dikes, ye ain't jivin'. Ye cain't be jiving'. Let's go over to the airport an' have shot o' booze." I was referring to the redneck bar down the highway from us.

As we keep on running, all you can hear is our feet slopping through the mud, dogs barking, the heavy breathing, the drugs in the bag jingling, and one of the Trinity's components - the rain.

Now we reach the Caddy. "Mark, come on, open the door! Let's get outta here!"

"Alright. Be cool. Nobody seen us." Mark then talked to our buyers on the walkie-talkie and tells them, using Pig Talk, that we are alright, got the goods, and are on our way to their place for the payoff.

The drive to the payoff is a careful one. Obey all the Rules of the Road and drive as if you were taking your drivers' test all over again. Mark's playing FM and we're hearing a pretty cool song. I don't know who made it up or its name, but it relaxes me.

Fumbling under the seat I ask, "Where's the gun?"

"Inside the glove compartment with the tape deck."

"Oh. Loaded, ain't it?"

"Yeah, of course."

"Good, cause I don't trust those hippies anyway. They might be narcs or ripoffs or somethin'. That long hair makes me wary. Just plain dirty-looking."

"Yeah. I know whatcha mean. Remember Nick?"

"Yeah, ole egg-sucking Nick. He was a damn fool." We were talking about a pusher who fell into a double trap. A foxy hippie broad set him up with the narcs for a deal. Nick fell head over heels for the broad. Tried warning him about her but he said they were in love and she wouldn't do that to him. He now writes his letters of love from a cell block in Stateville.

"You ever see Lynn anymore?"

"Lynn?"

"Yeah, Mark, you know. She used to come to Jim's parties."

"Oh, yeah. Lynn. She's running around with Linda Big Tits now."

"Man, there's an idiot chick. Remem-ber that night we ran into her and her idiot girlfriend, a-ah-"

"Cathy."

"Yeah, Cathy Dee. D for dummy. Ha Ha."

"Yeah, two blockheads alright. Typi-cal foxed-up idiot chicks. We made them pay their own way for breakfast

that night cause they were too dumb to carry on a conversation. Why you ask about Lynn?"

"I dunno, Mark. I always did like her. She's not only a fox, but has a personality, brains, and class to match. That's rare. But she always hung around nitwit guys. I could never figure that out. Here she can have someone with real class, like myself, and instead she chooses idiot after idiot. I remember the time when me and Scott were in Spain. Scott had some college chick and I had her; we were all walking on the beach. I'd wanted her for months. I finally grabbed her and kissed her real hard. She looked at me with that damn personality of hers and looked half surprised and half wanting. I told her I wanted to make love to her right then, so let's go to my room. She refused because of Tom. Since me an' him were always good friends, I felt foolish even trying to apologise. She then kissed me right on the fuckin' forehead and just smiled. Just smiled. I always wanted her."

"You never told me that. Take her to the Club with ya."

"Haw, can't do that. Because of my buddiness with her ex-boyfriend she just never would go out with me. Anyway that's gonna be Jack Johnson time. I gotta get me one of those Playboy bunnies, Mark. For a C note. I never done that before."

"And I ain't never done this before. If we don't get our money we ain't going nowhere. Here's the house. One oh seven."

"Mark, you knock. I'll hide by the side of the house with the goodies in case something tricky comes up."

"Okay." Mark pounds on the door. The hippies answer immediately.

"Where's the dope and the book?" they ask.

"I wanna look around first. Leave the door open."

"Okay, man, no hassle, everything is cool."

Mark walks around as I watch through the window.

"Where's your friend?" asks one of the hippies.

"Outside." Mark yells for me to come in. I walk around and check it with gun exposed. They ask for the goods again. I tell Mark to go out in the car and get them. There is a 20 second pause without a word said until Mark returns. He places the bags on the table and they make a grab for it, but I place my gun hand over theirs.

"Where's the money?" I demand.

"Donny, go get the dough. First, let's see the dope."

"Not till we see the cash. Twenty dollar bills."

"Okay, you sure are a straight shooter, my man. Wanna joint?"

"Nope, just the money." The hippie tosses the money back over our bags.

"It's all here, John. Ten grand in twenty dollar bills. Five each."

"You hippies are alright. Mark, give 'em the bags."

"Keep your hands off the money till we search the bags."

"You hippies shoot straight sometimes too, dontcha?"

"My man, you're alright." They are delighted when they see the dope and overwhelmed when they open the priceless prescription book. I wonder how much they'll make on the deal. Surely more than the ten g's they paid us or else they wouldn't have done it. I'm curious to ask, but I remember this is a business trip not a question and answer interview. Mark closes the moneysack and we tell them goodbye and good luck. They tell us the same and shake our hands in soul brother fashion as we leave to the Caddy.

"Where you going, John?"

"Let's go to a restaurant, Mark."

"Man, its almost four thirty. I'm going home, get cleaned up, and go to bed. Then I'm gonna pack, call Edie, and head for Shaffer Lake."

"Mark, take me to my car. I'm gonna start playing Jack Johnson right now. Pick up a coupla buddies and get some rooms and tomorrow I'll get me my Playboy bunny."

I open the moneybag and laugh. Ten grand. "Mark, this is just like the movies. Buddy, we're badder 'n Jesse James, badder 'n John Dillinger and badder 'n James Bond. We're badder 'n all them cats." I raise my hand and Mark lets his right hand off the wheel to meet the downward swoon of mine. Skin slapping skin. The noise is as distinct as the money. "Yeah, them hippies cut it up just like we wanted, five hundred twenty dollar bills."

"Put mine in the plastic bag under the seat."

"You got one of them too?"

"Yeah, why? Do you too?"

"Yeah," I laugh. After splitting it up I criss-cross my arms holding the bags. More Laughter. "Don't forget whose bag is whose now, Mark."

Mark stops in front of my house where my car is parked in the drive. "Well, John, this is adios for awhile, buddy. You gonna be in town when I get back?"

"I dunno. How long you gonna be?"

"Probably a week or two."

"Maybe. If not I'll give ya a call from wherever I'm at. Take care. And, hey, don't spend it all in one spot."

"Yeah, I hear ya. Later."

As Mark drives off I'm watching his taillights fade. I throw up my arms with my money in the left, throw back my head, and let out a yell of pure satisfaction. I'm all alone now. I look at my watch. Nearly five o'clock. Trinity is in His last two hours and I haven't even thanked him yet. By eight the police will know of the break in. I should go inside, throw off my boots and clothes, take a shower and get some sleep. Then tomorrow I'd

call up some friends and start the Jack Johnson act. Buy my friends new suits, feast, then head up to Lake Geneva Playboy Club for the bunnies. I told Mark that I was gonna start all that now but that doesn't even make sense to me.

I'm going to walk around the neighborhood some. Enjoy the Trinity and all of its "ugliness" described by "society". He's been beautiful to me. But I recall an old philosophy told by Trinity's brother - saying not to get too friendly with Trinity because He'll reject you in ways only He knows how to do. Then, goes the philosophy, you'll see why He is hated and why only 10% fall helplessly under His power. I don't believe it. I'm one of his friends, even if it is only for a night. But the Trinity's brother warned me not to use the Trinity to my advantage unless I want to be one of the 10. I guess I'm breaking that rule. But so what? Trinity is just a figure in my imagination anyway, isn't He?

As I'm walking, I'm thinking. Hell, I'm going out into the woods. No wandering counties wondering what I'm holding in my hand or doing out in the streets at 5 in the morning. The woods are Trinity's friends too. It's scary there. Who knows, maybe I'll get attacked by a bear or something.

About a third of the way into the woods, I stumble upon this bum. He's wearing a long, dirty overcoat, white (now gray from grime) socks, worn out shoes, and a plastic covering over his bearded head, protecting him from the rain as he sleeps on the ground. I contemplate whether to disturb him. I decide to wake him, since there is nothing else to do. I kneel down and shake him. He's lying on his side curled up with hands under his head. He opens his right eye and looks at me unalarmed.

"Wake up, old buddy!"

"Whataya want, sonny?"

"Nuthin'. Just wanna talk."

He laughs. "Oh yeah, what about?" He shifts into a sitting position like the Indians used to do, legs crossed at the ankles with hands dangling between the knees.

"How about a hundred dollars?"

"For what?"

"Nuthin'. Here. Take it."

"Why, sonny, thanks a lot. You're crazy."

"Hey, it's alright." There is a pause as I watch him gaze upon my gift, as if God appeared from heaven.

"Sonny, you know the last time I even felt this much money at one time? It was back in '67. I had my wife and two kids then and was working steady. I betcha they're big football players now."

"What happened?"

"My wife took the kids an' up an' left me. I lost all my savings, home, and finally my job, trying to find them. Then I guess I gave up on life itself. This is real nice of ya, sonny. Level with me, whadaya want me to do?"

"Nuthin'. Take it. Ain;t you curious where I got it from?"

"Nope. I never ask people about their business."

"Well, ya know that drugstore off the highway?"

"Yeah."

"Well, I robbed it. Right here in this bag I got five thousand dollars!"

"Five thousand dollars," the bum drools with disbelief.

"Yep. Five G's. Well, four thousand, nine hundred now," I tell him as I slap him on the back.

"You're too nice of a kid for all that."

"Naw, really I did it. Besides, Trinity's with me."

The bum seems alarmed at my last statement. He moves his arms back on the ground behind him as he looks at me with doorknob size eyes. "Sonny, don't ever say that. Ever. Who told you about the Trinity?"

"You heard of the Trinity? I always thought I invented it. Oh come on, don't look at me like that. Ya know, I betcha you're joking me. I once read a book on where it said bums like to kid around with us straight folk. Okay, if you know of the Trinity tell me His components!"

"That's easy. He's here right now." He lifts his left arm to the sky open-handed. He resumes his answer as he looks skyward. "The rain, the cold, and the night. The only thing He can't defeat is time. Within a couple hours He'll lose again. Then His brother will fight to take over."

Now I've seen the ghost. "You do know of the Trinity! This is weird. How'd you find out about Him?"

"I dunno. I can't remember anybody saying or telling me about it. I guess Trinity Himself tells only those who He wants to. That way we all think we invented Him, and the word doesn't get around. Now, sonny, if you did rob the store, you better run and hide somewhere. By early morning they'll be hunting for ya. Police always run checks through here."

"How do you know?"

"I see 'em all the time. They used to ask me if I seen a man fittin' this description, but they don't any more cause I always told them no."

"You live here?"

"From time to time. Got a little shack aways further down, but tonight I was too pissed to make it, so I slept here."

"I wanna see it, if its okay with you."

"Well, you should go because of the police-"

"Let me worry about that."

"Okay, if you insist. I'll show a man anything for what you did for me tonight."

"Hey, forget it, man, it was nothing." The trudge to his home was shorter than I thought. [illegible]

a word on the way there and he definitely isn't interested about discussing the Trinity any further. The thought that we both see the Trinity the same gives me goose bumps and shivers of the supernatural all over my spine and body. Just wr silence and the rain is enough to ill me, I guess, because I directly late the Trinity to both.

"I'll be damned. This's quite a place yo got here, old buddy. How long you ha it?"

"Coupla months, maybe more."

"ow long it take ya to build?"

"ybe a week, several days."

"ything inside?"

"ok for yourself." I step inside. Nothi much. He has an old mattress with ankets over it for a bed, and an empty vet keg from the railroad crudely made i o a chair. That was it, period.

"Yo now...BOOM!" A loud crash alarms s. I pull my gun automatically upon ction to the sound and grasp tight t my money. We turn and look outsideand don't believe our eyes.

"Wha in the hell's that?"

"I dno, sonny, but you better believe it's a friend of Trinity's."

"Wha should we do?"

"Hel, your guess is as good as mine. I got aballbat under the mattress. I'll ge that while you shoot it with the gun You're in trouble you know. If he's sent by Trinity, it's you he wants. You musta broke one of the laws. Didn't his brother warn you about the laws?"

"Yeal, but I thought it wasn't for REAL, this Trinity bit."

"Yo Trinity likes to allure you with tat thought. Well, we better brace ourselves against it."

It's got to be an animal of some kind. It looks gorilla-like with a human smeared face. No hair and no distinct features. Rough yet smooth. I guess the test description would be burnt flesh. Imagine melting all your skin in a bucket and having someone smear it all around your body. Then letting it dry in slumps. Afterwards someone smooths it off with a sander. Olive oil is soaked all over you for the sleek cougar-like appearance. See, it's rough yet smooth.

One thing is for sure - I never seen anything like it in my life. If I had to name it I'd call it X because of fear and its ability to make me lose my train of thought.

X came to fight. I wish Jack Johnson was here to help me now. Just me and my old buddy here to fight X.

X rushes me when he focuses me with his beady eyes. I freeze. I pull the trigger of my gun and its powerful ring brings me to my senses. Despite my missing X, I think of the story when Jack Dempsey was deer hunting out in Canada. They were sleeping when attacked by a bear. Jack had just enough time to reach for his gun and take one shot at the oncharging bear. He fired and with the aim as deadly as his devastating left hook, he nailed the bear between the eyes and felled it. He was able to accomplish the miraculous because he kept his cool. I must do the same in order to dodge death.

I drop the money inside the shack. I fire at X again and he doesn't appear to be phased. He attacks me and I move out of his way by sliding along counter-clock-wise. The bum blasts him right in the back of the head with his ball-bat. X turns towards the bum. I fire again but miss X and wound the bum instead. He clutches his chest and falls to the ground.

"Sonny, I'm hit. Divert him! Divert him!" I respond by kicking X in the back. X stumbles and falls. As the bum crawls out of range, I fire point blank on X. Right in the eye. X growls angrily and appears hurt.

"Get outta here, sonny. Move. Now!"

"No way! What about you?"

"Dammit! Forget me, just go! I can manage. He's after you, not me. Now get out. Ya hear me, GO!"

I don't know what to do. Will the bum die? Who's gonna help him? Police won't come through here till at least another hour, probably two. I can't leave him here to die. And what if X turns on him and attacks just for the hell of it? The old man is too weak to fight him off. I fire again but nothing. I throw it and kick at his face as he clutches his eye.

"Get outta here, sonny. Trinity will take care of him. Just leave and listen for His decision on the radio. Just go!"

I stop kicking X and look at myself, covered with blood. I stare at the bum with wide open eyes and my breathing comes in gasps. My clothes are torn. As I stand over X, I realize that the bum is a great man. He values my existence over his life. He's willing to give his life for my hope. That's greatness. As I'm looking at him I wonder how a man so great can wind up like he did. Some might think he has nothing to lose. But life, any man's life, is a great thing to lose. If he felt hopeless he'd have committed suicide long ago. I guess the statement about a man being able to become destroyed by a woman is true, for I have seen living proof of it tonight. I go over to drag him with me, but he fights me off. He pleads again that I leave. This time his command reaches me.

I take my last look at X, grab my money, and run wildly through the woods. I look down at my wrist to check the time, but my watch is no longer there. The police will have leads - the watch, the blood. Both dead ends, along with the empty gun. And the bum won't tell them my identity. Those thoughts add to my confusion as I run all the way home, not even caring about getting spotted.

As I strip off my clothes, I'm worried about the bum. All I can do is wait. I lay on my bed in my underwear. I try to sleep but can't. Trinity's time is nearly up and He's probably calling back his forces. I hope the bum has made it. Will the Trinity return to haunt me? Should I do as the bum says and wait for the media? I wish I had a good woman.

Suddenly my mind shifts to Jack Johnson. He died while driving one of his fast cars fast. People say that the odds caught up to him finally. Or did Trinity have something to do with it? Does Trinity have a power over you, or do you give it strength?

When my emotions got the best of me I decided to play some albums. I get up and pick Sam Cooke's Greatest Hits. Sam Cooke's music always relaxes me, and I need that now. He's singing "Frankie and Johnny", the ballad where Johnny gets shot by Frankie for messing around with another chick named Nellie Blye. Strange. Because Sam Cooke was shot to death one night in a motel room by a man who found him making love to his girl. Scary. I wonder if Trinity was involved or if Sam's murderer was a friendly visitor from Trinity.

The Trinity definitely is after me. Maybe the bum was right in that I must fight, kill, and defeat it. Stay unemotional, I tell myself, and reason instead of reacting. I forget Sam's tragic death and let his music take me. What power he had when he sang a song. It makes me drowsy and I doze off....

I wake up at 11. Now I must do as the bum told me. I dress, wash, get my money off the dresser and leave in my car.

Instinctively I wind up in the Golden Bear Restaurant. I buy the early edition of the paper, find the article I was hunting for; it reads-"MAN FOUND MURDERED IN WOODS." It also says, "Early this morning Will County Police found a middle aged man slain in the County Woods. Killing of the unidentified man seems pointless since $100 was found on him. Despite a bullet wound in the chest, coroner William Blood said the cause of death appears to be from strangulation. Police say they have no leads on the case."

X killed my great man. An attempt by Trinity to anger me. The hell with worrying; it's time to play Jack Johnson. Call up the boys, buy the suits, go after the dollies.

You know its 25¢ to make a phone call now. Them machines don't accept nothing but quarters in their single slot. Nice, easy, and expensive.

"Jimmy, what's up"

"Hey, Johnny, how are ya? Long time no see. Where you at, Marks""

"No, he went to Shaffer Lake. I'm at the Bear. Say, you wanna have a blast?"

"Whadaya mean?"

"Get in touch with Michael and meet me here in a half an hour."

"I ain't ready."

"Well get ready. I'm going crazy today. Jack Johnson!"

"Jack Johnson?"

"Yeah, Jack Johnson. We're going on a buying spree. Forget about the money. It's on me. I'm loaded."

"How you get "loaded?"

"Found these old boys last night at a poker game. They're my new source of income. I found my dream! These guys can't play a lick and they don't even mind losing a grand or two. They call it entertainment expense."

"Let me in on it."

"No way, Jimmy. I've been waiting for something like this for years. Come on, I'm treating."

"Ok, crazy man, I hear ya. I'll get Mike and see ya as soon as I can."

Click. Rereading the paper I found that the hippies got busted. And didn't pig out on us. Them hippies are alright. I never figured that the Trinity could do damage during the day. Maybe it was His brother trying to keep his slate clean. It's his day too; sunny, warm, and dry. Beautiful.

I'm thinking so intently over it all over my coffee that Jimmy and Mike startle me. It's one-thirty in the afternoon, but it doesn't seem that late. I tell them of my plan of action for the day and they eat it up, just like they did their steaks at Al's.

Standing outside of Baskin's Clothing Store, Jimmy clowns with his new hat. "Hey, my man, whadaya think?"

"Michael, don't ya just have to say he looks DE-VINE."

"Yeah John, dig that hat, the velvet look. But look at me, Cool huh?"

"Michael," my voice raises as I say his name, " Al Capone woulda been proud of ya in those pinstripes. And dig the vest and pocketwatch OOOOOOOOWEE Class, real class. "I throw my arm around Jimmy and call my suit out for attention. "Jimmy don't this make me look like Jack Johnson. Look at the vest,man and most of all the brim. Nice shade of tan huh? Just like the scene in THE GREAT WHITE HOPE, where he is standing next to that freak Willard by the Havana racetrack. Jack was wearing the same outfit."

"Yeah, yeah brother, hit me. Jack Johnson reincarnated!"

"Except you're white," Micheal laughs.

"Ah, so what?" I add jokingly. "I'm hip just like Jack was and that's all that matters. "We all laugh. "Wel let's hit the dollies."

"We going to the Chicago Club?" Mike asks.

"No, can't get in. But we'll go to Lake Geneva. I know a guy there who'll let ya use his card if ya rent his rooms. Jimmy, got the camera? I gotta take me my centerfold."

"For sure, for sure, good buddy. Right here," he says as he holds it up for me to see.

"Let's head up for the dollies then," Michael rejoices.

As we're heading through the lot Jimmy spots a new T-Bird with the keys in it. "Hey, let's take it! Come on. We'll have real class. Go all the way. What ya say, John, it's better than my old Chevy. Jack Johnson, baby. Cash, flash and class. Live fast and die pretty."

It hits me with mixed emotions. It's dusk now, nearly night. Chilly. Trinity might be here tonight too. The thought of doing evil scares me. It always does, but I'm always attracted to it. Somehow curiosity attracts me. I want to see what will happen. Then I think of the bum and the hippies and the fight is on. I gotta gain revenge on the Trinity. Take it, my mind tells me.

"Come on, John, snap out of it," Jimmy commands. "Let's get in and go!" he exclaims, as he sits sideways in the seat with it started, one foot in and one foot out and the door hanging open.

"Man, then we'll have the cops after us," I say, feeling a coward. "No we won't. Lookie here. See that sticker? Well, that means the owner of this car works at Baskin's, and they don't get off til 9. By then we'll be in Geneva."

I laugh insanely. "Jack Johnson, here we come!" I let Michael get in the back as I ride shotgun.

"Hey, flick on FM, Johnny."

"Okay, good buddy. Mike, whadaya think?"

"What can I say? This is just hip. I think I'm gonna sleep for awhile, for the dollies."

"Michael, I judge, you're sumthin' else. All this excitement going on and you can go to sleep. You're sumthin' else."

The Trinity is coming on again and Rt. 59 is fitting. Desolate, lonely, except for an occasional oncomer, who even less occasionally you have to use road language by flicking your brights at him. The whimping of window-wipers tells me the Trinity is traveling to Wisconsin with us. Now I can see how Michael fell asleep.

"What's wrong, John?"

"Nuthin', Jimmy, just a little weary," I answer weakly. The Trinity is taking its toll on me mentally. But He won't let X appear again because He knows my hatred for X as His symbol will give me strength. The news report on the radio turns my attention to what the bum said about waiting for Trinity's decision through the use of the media. So far I haven't heard any message through the radio. The conditions tell me He's here. I'm waiting.

"News, news, news," Jimmy complains as he switches channels.

"Leave it on!" I yell at him as I switch it back.

"Okay, okay, whatever."

"Sorry, buddy, I guess I'm a little edgy."

"Hey, you don't have to apologize to me. I already owe you a bundle."

"Naw ya don't. It's on me." We both laugh again. I concentrate on the report again. The announcer rambles then the Trinity hits me. "Recapping today's top story: A young man, identified as Mark Lega, 22, of Red-Circle Drive, Joliet, and his 19 year old female companion, also of Joliet, were found murdered in their hotel room two hours ago by Lake Shaffer police. No clues have been found and an investigation is pending."

The rest of the news is insignificant. Jimmy and I look at each other in disbelief. I look at the car watch and its 9 o'clock. Trinity had to be involved. I tell Jimmy to pull in the coffee shop just up the road and let me check the paper. He can tell Mike when we stop.

"It won't be in -"

"Never mind. Stop here." I run in and pick up a paper. I look for weather conditions. I thumb down until I see, "SHAFFER LAKE.....cldy, rn all day, low tnght 37" Cold, rainy all day, I translate. Definitely the Trinity. I run out.

"Jimmy, let me drive. Jack Johnson always drove his cars." He does as I tell him. Now he's riding shotgun. After checking in at my friend, John Grant's, motel, the Mint, we get his card and head for the Club.

"Each man on his own now. Here, fellas, take a coupla hundred each. Find yourself a dolly," I say as we leave the Playboy rest room.

"You look lonely, honey, wanna dance?" I look up from my scotch and water right into the eyes of a gorgeous Bunny. Reminiscent of my female TV sweetheart, Sophia Loren.

"No, but would you join me for a drink?"

"Well, okay." I call over a waitress. I take another while she surprises me by asking for a vodka gimlet.

"Where you from?"

"A little town called Joliet. Small, but bigger than this one."

"Oh, I see. I'm from New York originally." The waitress brings us our drinks and I hand her a C note and tell her to keep the change. "You gonna be in town long, sweetie?"

"Cut the sweetie. My name's Jack. Jack Johnson. What's yours?"

"Sophia."

"It can't be!"

"I know it. Lots of people say I look like her. No, my name is Linda."

"What brought you here, Linda?"

"A transfer. I was in the Jersey Club but I applied for a transfer to this one cause I love the skiing."

"What about the money?"

"Yeah, I took a cut in pay, but I manage. What you do for a liv-"

"No-no-no now," I say, childishly as I shake my finger at her.

She now seems curious and interested. I open my wallet to expose my C notes to her. Then I pull out a scrap of paper and write my room number on it and hand it to her with a C note wrapped around it.

"Room one eleven, the Mint?"

"Yeah, Linda, when can I expect ya?"

"First, another 100."

"Here. I'll give ya another when ya get there."

"Jack. How about my place?" she asks as she stuffs the money down her front. "It's more romantic there." She flips the paper over and writes "Apt. 107, Terrin Drive - 102". She kisses me seductively, deliberately pressing against me and says, "Two o'clock."

She walks away and I have a couple of more drinks before I leave. As I'm walking to the T-Bird I'm thinking about the police knowing of the stolen car. But after Mark and Edie's murder I just don't care. The cold infuriates me. I go to my room and wait, pondering my next move. I decide after Linda's tonight I'll take a bus home tomorrow. Jimmy and Michael will probably do the same. Or have some girls they found tonight do it? Or better yet, they'll take a car back that is stolen too. That's just like them. With Jimmy driving and Michael sleeping.

"Jack, you're late."

"You gonna let me in or do I have to knock?" Linda just smiles and opens her arms. We embrace as I close the door. She is simply magnificent, feels and smells like a real woman. Just what I need. After the preliminary small talk, she shocks me.

"Get naked, sweetie."

"Ain't that sumthin'. YOU ask ME to get naked!"

As I start to strip down, she asks me if I want another drink.

"You got any JB?"

"Mm, huh. One scotch and water, coming up." As I'm laying in the bed she hands me my drink, then starts to skin herself. As I let her beauty intoxicate me, something snaps me out of it. Instead of thinking about sex, the Trinity chills my thoughts. I take a heavy slug of my scotch.

As she continues her tease I'm thinking of our trivia conversation. It's beginning to register. She told me she ENJOYED skiing at night. Why did she come up to ME and why HER place instead of mine. Why tell ME, SHE loves the winter. The scotch is making me weak and dizzy. Or is it her beauty and the pressure of it all? SHE made the drink, not me. Is it drugged? Why does SHE love the snow? Jimmy don't. Michael don't. Mark didn't. And I remember them hippies bitching about having to watch outside in the cold. The reason they couldn't stay in their cars was because police would be wondering what two people are doing in their cars parked off the main highway at 3 am, if spotted.

She's scaring me now. Is she a part of the Trinity, a friend or a visitor. She's completely naked except for panties and nylons. The drink continues to weaken me, but I'm still strong enough to take her. Like a fighter I must act more hurt than I really am. Start acting, young fella. I start moaning and groaning in the bed and complaining of weakness and feel like fainting. "Linda, what's wrong with me? I - I - I, oh, I can't move. Help me!"

Just what I thought! She smiles. Now she'll try the coup de grace. "Sweetie," she starts as she bends over me, "remember when you said you wanted to tell me about a story I wouldn't believe. And how I said I heard all the lines before." She pauses waiting for my weak nod. I slyly notice her taking my drink and placing it on the bedpost above my head. She turns her body when doing this but keeps her eyes on me. By showing me those huge, beautiful breasts as distractions from her grabbing something else, I go along by continuing my act, as if I'm falling for her. She continues her torture. "Well, you know I would of believed ya."

As she tries to thrust her knife into me I react like a fighter by gaining her tipoff of the eyes enlarging before she thrusts down. I easily evade the thrust by rolling sideways. We struggle. I don't know if it's the drink or what but she fights harder than I expected.

We both tumble from the bed. All I hear is our fall, and her struggling. She rolls me, I do likewise, then she totally stops resisting. I roll her over on her back and see the knife is lodged all the way through her heart. Blood is spurting all over. But even in death she looks exotic. I don't believe what has happened. Yeah, the war is still on.

I rise up groggy and stare at her momentarily. I think of stories about how motorcycle riders make love to dead chicks. Sickening but true nevertheless. I dress and struggle to the door the wind has now blown open. I look outside at the Trinity. For those who admire Him, He's in full regalia and looks Divine. But I'm His enemy, an outcast. I can't return to His brother either cause he looks upon me as one of the percent that the Trinity is supposed to take in. That's why the Trinity is after me. He's got me, yet he doesn't.

With one hand on my hip and one bracing myself up against the door frame, I look at Linda, then turn my head back to the Trinity outside and say mentally, "Trinity, you have defeated me but you can't beat me. You have made me one of the ten but you cannot rule me. I'll fight you forever. You made me like the bum. I have nowhere to go back to. But I'll carry on. See, I'm defeated but not beaten. We'll meet again - I'm damn sure of it. And you'll lose again, I'm sure. I'll whip your ass if it means my life. Just like the bum did for me."

Trinity is not the King for nothing. He counters. "Yeah, you survived tonight, young fella. But I have many more challenges for you to overcome. I can afford to lose, you can't. Another advantage I have is time. Because you'll have to look for me while I can just go

try to run cause I possess the time to to catch you. See, I possess the time, you don't. Your idol, Jack Johnson, tried to run too. I finally caught up to him one night on a winding highway deep into South Carolina. No, I didn't get you tonight in Geneva, nor last night in Joliet, but I will. Rest assured, if you can, I'll get ya. Yep, young man, I'm gonna getcha.

As Trinity laughs heartily at me through the use of His intimidating friend, the thunder, I just walk out of Linda's apartment with coat open, hands in pockets, and head down like the lonely character in the Beatles' song "Nowhere Man", into his domain, letting His components beat upon me physically as I carry the burdening thought of continuing my struggle against an adversary only the select few will believe exists.

- John Scott -

DEFINITIONS

Mystery is the person you'll love but haven't met,
Belief is the greatest force the world has seen yet.
Faith is believing when all is clouded in doubt,
Freedom is the cause which life is all about.
Greatness is in the person who reaches another without fright,
Truth is in the eyes that are always open and bright.
Kindness is the smile that enables the heart to feel,
Honesty is the touch that another takes for real.
Spirit is the bus picking up the hearts of us all,
Pride is the wagon carrying the hurt to break your fall.
Jesus is the doctor who cures all disease,
Tenderness is the warmth which puts the timid at ease.
Imagination is the switch that enlightens a person's mind.
Justice is the elusive object that is slippery to grasp and find.
Life is the book that all of us must read,
Destiny is the command that all of us must heed.
Courage is the stone that smashes confusion and hate,
Love is the scale by which all should be overweight.
Evil is the look a face should not allow to rule,
God is the judge who prosecutes the cruel.
Happiness is the arrow flying thru you faster than lightning,
Death is the midnight stalker who is ever so frightening.
Tragedy is the punch that rocks you with its jolt,
Knowledge is the thunder louder than the greatest bolt.
Personality is the magic trick that nobody can be taught,
Experience is the lesson learned by those who believed and fought.

JAWS LINGO-